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8 delicious ways to make **The Best Meatloaf**

Bacon-wrapped stout and cheddar meatloaf, page 65

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CONTENTS

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2011 ISSUE 109



Eileen Yin-Fei Lo shows us how to shape the dough for Chinese pork buns. To take her class, turn to page 74.

FEATURES

40 The New One-Pot Dinner

Break out of your old one-pot rut with slow-cooked, soul-warming braises and stews from five talented chefs. *By Raquel Pelzel*

48 Go for the Grain

Meet amaranth, farro, millet, teff, and quinoa, five delicious, easy-to-find grains that will soon be your favorite pantry staples. *By Anna Thomas*

56 Dinner for Two

An indulgent Valentine's Day menu that comes together in just 30 minutes.

58 Meatloaf

COOKING WITHOUT RECIPES

One simple method, endless flavor variations. *By Allison Ehri Kreidler*

66 Hello, Yellow

When winter produce looks bleak, bananas brighten everything from curries to sticky buns and scones. *By Nicole Rees*

74 Steamed Pork Buns

COOKING CLASS School's in session: Eileen Yin-Fei Lo teaches us the ins and outs of a Chinese dim sum specialty—fluffy buns filled with sweet-and-savory barbecued pork.

82 In a Pickle

Mushrooms, fennel, and onions become quick and easy pickles (no canning required!) that will perk up your cold-weather cooking. *Recipes by Eugenia Bone*

CONTENTS

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2011 ISSUE 109



34



38



36



28



17

DEPARTMENTS

15 Marketplace

TRY THIS Kumquats

WHAT WE'RE COOKING NOW Fennel, Kale, Kiwi, Leeks, Oranges, Potatoes, Walnuts, and Watercress

PRESERVING THE SEASON Cabbage

BIG BUY COOKING Celery

22 Make It Tonight

FAST AND FRESH Just 30 minutes to dinner, start to finish.

27 The Reading List

BOOKS THAT COOK New must-have reads for food lovers.

28 The Comeback Kid

DRINKS Vermouth, an under-appreciated cocktail co-star, is about to get its due.

31 Great Finds

GO SHOPPING Our latest buys for the kitchen and table.

32 Pressure Cookers

TEST DRIVE Our favorite pressure cookers turn slow-cooking dishes into weeknight dinner options.

34 Creamed Spinach

REPERTOIRE A classic side dish that all cooks should have in their recipe boxes.

36 A Pinch of Salt

THE GOOD LIFE While too much salt isn't good for you, too little makes for a bland meal. Learn how to strike the right balance.

38 The Science of Perfect Cookies

FOOD SCIENCE Answers to your burning baking questions.

89 Test Kitchen

Tips, techniques, equipment, ingredients, and more, from our experts.

98 Francine Segan

FOOD FOR THOUGHT Aphrodisiacs are this food historian's bread and butter.

in every issue

- 6 FROM THE EDITOR
- 8 READERS' LETTERS
- 10 CONTRIBUTORS
- 12 FINECOOKING.COM
- 94 WHERE TO BUY IT
- 95 NUTRITION
- 96 MENUS
- 97 RECIPE INDEX



p. 56

p. 40

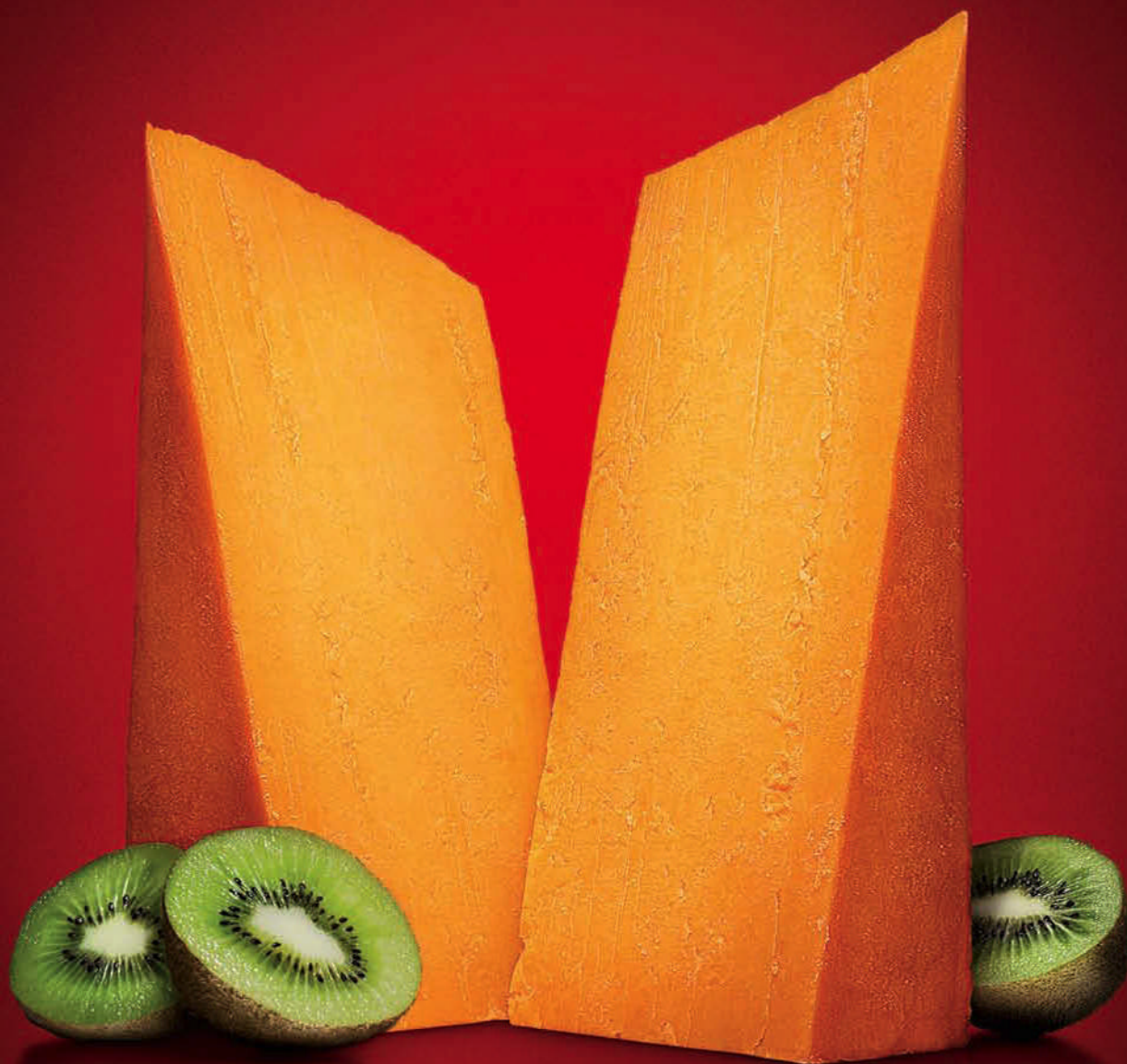
p. 48

p. 38

p. 74

p. 58

Spoil your tongue.



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Cook the Cold Away

ALL YEAR LONG, I LOOK FORWARD TO COOKING WITH HIGH-SUMMER INGREDIENTS: corn, tomatoes, peaches, and the like. But then winter turns up, wearing its cold, dark, and blustery mood, and I remember that there really isn't a better time to cook than now. Cold-weather cooking warms the house and the heart, and makes for some truly delicious eating. We're doing plenty of that in this issue, as you can see here.



46

One-Pot Wonders

We love a great classic chili (check out Ellie Krieger's hearty, spice-rich version on page 36) as much as the next cook, but we also love a taste of adventure on occasion. And adventure is just what we got when we went to five chefs with wildly different cooking styles to get their takes on **winter-warming braises and stews**. From Zak Pelaccio's (he of New York's Fatty Crab) intensely flavored Malaysian chicken (page 47) to

Suzanne Goin's (she of Lucques in Los Angeles) rich and satisfying braised short ribs with salsa verde and feta (page 46), these are dishes that will surprise and inspire.



56

Valentine's Day

Just because it's a Monday, and just because we spend our days at a desk (or in the *Fine Cooking* test kitchen) instead of at home by the stove, doesn't mean we aren't going to make a big deal out of Valentine's Day. Miss a chance to **open a bottle of Champagne and cook up something special?** Nope. Find the indulgent (lobster, chocolate) and easy (just 30 minutes of cooking, start to finish) solution to this culinary dilemma on page 56.



76

A Dim Sum Cooking Class

As long-time admirers of Eileen Yin-Fei Lo, a living legend when it comes to classic Chinese cooking, we asked her to show us how to make *jing char siu bau*, those **irresistible barbecued pork dumplings** that top everyone's list of dim sum favorites. She traveled from New Jersey to our kitchens and spent two days taking us step by step through the process, leaving no hint, tip, or technique unturned (recipe on page 76; video at FineCooking.com).

You also won't want to miss our guide to cooking with good-for-you grains, from teff to quinoa to millet (page 48), along with this issue's Cooking Without Recipes feature on meatloaf (page 58). If I've learned nothing else in the past couple of months, I've mastered the art of wrapping a meatloaf in bacon (see page 92). And of course, everything's better with....



Laurie Buckle, editor
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IPAD APP

Our latest app, *Fresh & Simple*, is just the thing for anyone who's made a resolution to shop smarter and eat better. Find easy ways to eat less meat, delicious recipes for seasonal produce, and much more. Download to your iPad from the iTunes store after February 1.

SPECIAL ISSUES

These two new recipe collections are the perfect antidote to the cold weather. *Breakfast Anytime* will hit newsstands on February 8, and *Soups & Sandwiches* will be on sale February 22.



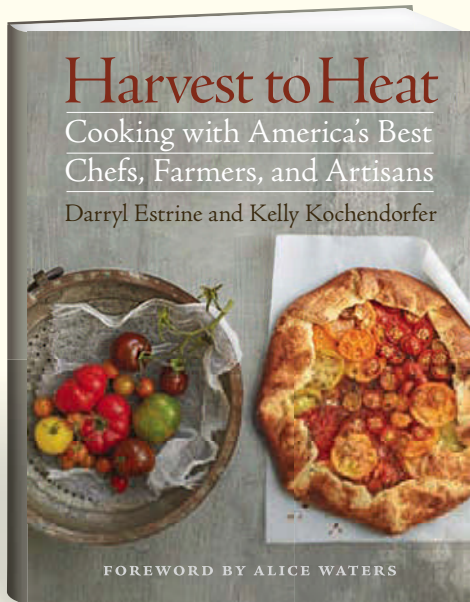
BOOK

Our most recent book, *Fine Cooking In Season*, will be your new guide to choosing and preparing the season's best produce. Available February 7; tauntonstore.com.

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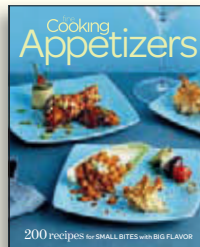
—ALICE WATERS

Harvest to Heat celebrates over 100 chefs and farmers who are changing the way we think about food. Enjoy behind-the-scenes stories of the local growers and artisans who produce the fresh ingredients featured in the signature dishes of famous American chefs. Includes gorgeous photography and 100 recipes from Thomas Keller, Charlie Trotter, Nancy Silverton, Daniel Boulud, Rick Bayless, Eric Warnstedt, and many others.

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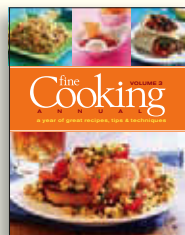
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THE WINNER

Tame the Flames

To diffuse the heat of a stovetop burner for simmering polenta or thick sauces that can burn easily, set your pot inside a large, heavy, preferably cast-iron skillet on top of the burner. The skillet distributes the heat more evenly than a metal flame tamer.

—Josh Solomon, Arcata, California

We want to hear from you. Send us your best tip and we'll pick a winner from all the entries. Josh is the winner of this Revol Belle Cuisine baking dish.

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Pear Love

Wow! The Pear Fritters (December/January) are the lightest fritters I've ever made. I had to eat one right away because they smelled so good. I burned my mouth, but it was worth it.

—Rebecca Raichle,
Norwood, Massachusetts

Delicious Challenge

The Classic Beef Wellington (December/January) was a lot of work, but what a dish. We made it for a dinner party, and everyone was quite taken with it. The beef was perfectly cooked, and the pâté/duxelles mixture and crêpes made a delicious savory coating. And then the buttery puff pastry over the whole thing—whoa! Amazingly delicious.

—Jennifer Mach,
Chicago, Illinois

Easy Weeknights

I spotted *Weeknight Dinner* [a newsstand-only collection of *Fine Cooking* recipes] in line at the market. I usually do the cooking in my household, and I planned four nights of meals with it. Thanks for the ideas.

—David Deviney,
Memphis, Tennessee

A New Passion

I'm fairly new to cooking, and I've recently been reading your magazine. The recipes have simple ingredients and are easy to follow but are sophisticated in taste and presentation. They gave me enough confidence to host my first dinner party for 16 people. My husband and I served an Indian menu courtesy of FineCooking.com, and every dish was outstanding. Thank you for feeding what is becoming a passion.

—Christene Duthler-Juneja,
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Croquembouche Troubleshooting

I tried to make the Salty Caramel Croquembouche with Ricotta Cream on the cover of the December/January issue, but the pâte à choux dough turned to soup—it was more like a batter than dough that could be piped. What did I do wrong?

—Eggsactly,
via Cooks Talk forum

Editor's reply: Temperature is the key here. Pâte à choux becomes soupy if the flour mixture isn't cool enough before adding the eggs. If the bottom of the mixing bowl feels even the slightest bit warm to the touch, the dough needs to cool more.

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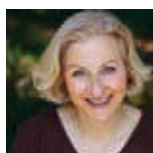
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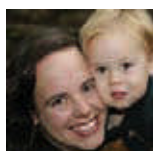
Anna Thomas (“Go for the Grain,” page 48) published her first cookbook, *The Vegetarian Epicure*, in 1972; it has sold almost a million copies. Her latest cook-

book, *Love Soup*, won a James Beard award in 2010.

• **My favorite food memory is...** staying in a Galician village during a feast day; the people made paella for 3,000 in a device the size of a swimming pool, and it was fantastic.

• **My guilty food pleasure is...** frozen yogurt.

• **The dish I most want to learn to cook is...** a spun sugar swan.



Kelly Alexander (“Francine Segal,” page 98) is an award-winning journalist and the author of *Hometown Appetites: The Story of Clementine Paddleford*,

the Forgotten Food Writer Who Chronicled How America Ate. She teaches food writing at Duke University.

• **If I weren’t a food writer, I’d be...** like Weird Al Yankovic, a writer of pop song parodies. I’m eternally writing them in my head.

• **My least favorite food is...** dill. My mom always stored it in the freezer, and once it got caught in the ice maker—the flavor was in everything we drank.

• **The last thing I ate was...** a handful of smoked, roasted, salted almonds with a handful of Junior Mints.



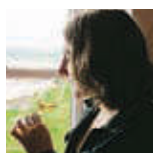
Allison Ehri Kreidler (“Meatloaf,” page 58), a *Fine Cooking* contributing editor, splits her time between New York City and Milford, Connecticut, as she juggles

food styling, recipe development, cooking instruction, and being a mom.

• **The last thing I cooked was...** slow-roasted Cuban pork shoulder.

• **I’m currently obsessed with...** salt-crusting meat and fish.

• **My drink of choice is...** tea, all day, in this order: hot, iced, alcoholic.



Liza Weisstuch (“The Comeback Kid,” page 28) is a Boston-based food and spirits writer who has contributed to *The Boston Globe* and *Imbibe* magazine,

among others.

• **My culinary icon is...** my grandmother, who made the best chicken soup and gefilte fish I’ve ever had. Well into her nineties, she could still whip them up with her eyes closed.

• **The strangest thing I’ve ever eaten was...** puffin, in Iceland. It tasted like cheese.

• **If I weren’t a journalist, I’d be...** in the merchant marines; I dream about the ocean at least three times a week.



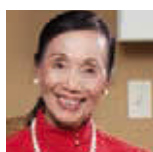
Melissa Pellegrino (“Celery,” page 20) has worked as a bread baker, cooking instructor, personal chef, and most recently, assistant food editor at

Fine Cooking. She and her husband, Matthew Scialabba, are the authors of *The Italian Farmer’s Table*.

• **The strangest thing I’ve ever eaten was...** braised duck stomach.

• **My biggest food-related pet peeve is...** when sun-dried tomatoes and canned artichokes are thrown on pasta and called “authentic Italian.”

• **My favorite food memory is...** making cappelletti pasta by hand with my grandmother, mother, and aunt.



Eileen Yin-Fei Lo (“Steamed Pork Buns,” page 74) is a renowned Chinese cookbook author, chef, and cooking instructor. She has written

11 cookbooks, including

Mastering the Art of Chinese Cooking.

• **My least favorite food is...** fusion cuisine, or “fusion confusion,” as I call it.

• **The dish I most want to learn to cook is...** jerk chicken or pork.

• **If I weren’t a cooking teacher, I’d be...** a spy. Spy stories are my favorite—they’re interesting and glamorous.



Eugenia Bone (“In a Pickle,” page 82) is a food writer and cookbook author. Her most recent book, *Well-Preserved*, was nominated for a James Beard award.

She’s currently writing *Mycophilia*, a book about fungi.

• **The strangest thing I’ve ever eaten was...** *amanita muscaria*, a poisonous mushroom with hallucinogenic properties. I ate it, fell into a deep sleep, and woke up with one shoe missing.

• **My favorite food splurge is...** a slurp fest at Grand Central Oyster Bar in New York.

• **My favorite aspect of my job is...** that I work at home, so I can wear a nightgown all day.



Debra Samuels (“Cabbage,” page 18) is the author of *The Korean Table* and a food writer and stylist for *The Boston Globe*. She’s

currently writing a

cookbook about Japanese cuisine.

• **The strangest thing I’ve ever eaten was...** live shrimp; they jump in your mouth.

• **Out to dinner or cook at home?... cook at home.** The more ingredients and the longer the recipe, the more fun I have.

• **My biggest food-related pet peeve is...** cheese; I loathe it. I love Asian cuisine because I don’t have to worry about cheese lurking everywhere.



Food writer **Raquel Pelzel** (“The New One-Pot Dinner,” page 40) is the author of *New Flavors for Desserts* and coauthor of several cookbooks, including *DamGood-*

Sweet, which was nominated for James Beard and International Association of Culinary Professionals awards.

• **I’m currently obsessed with...** trying to make the perfect biscuits, muffins, and pancakes.

• **The most underrated ingredient is...** curly parsley. It’s like the ugly stepchild of the herb world.

• **My desert island food is...** Rice Krispies Treats—I can’t control myself around them.

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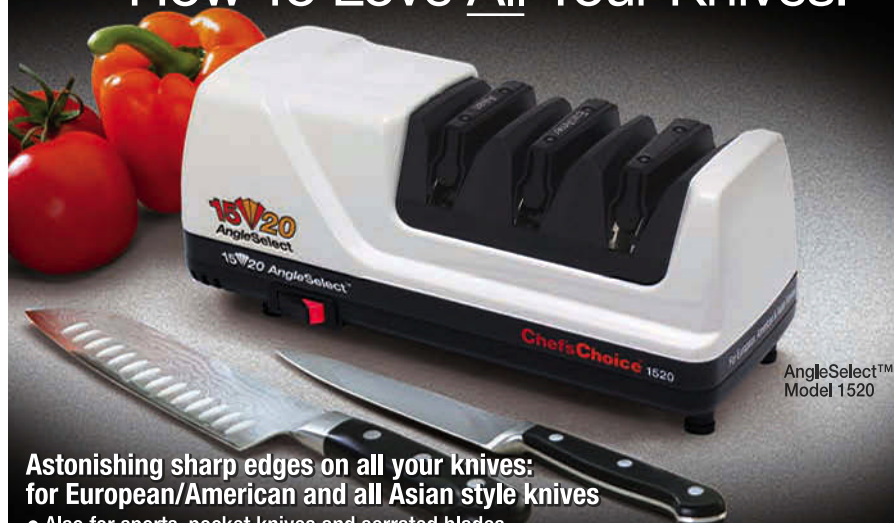
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Pulled-Pork Macaroni and Cheese with Caramelized Onions and Four Cheeses

Photographs by Scott Phillips

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- Fudgy brownies
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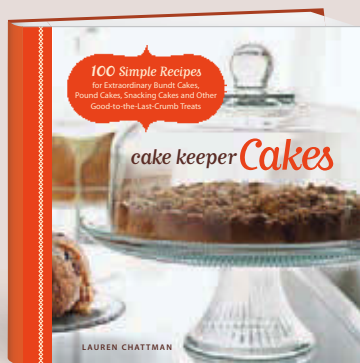
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MARKETPLACE

Shop Smarter, Eat Better



TRY THIS

Kumquats

KNOWN AS GOLDEN ORANGES in their native China, kumquats do indeed look like a miniature version of the citrus fruit. But with edible sweet skin and punchy, sour pulp, kumquats are in a category all their own.

Kumquats make their cheerful arrival in grocery stores in December and stay until April. As symbols of prosperity, they're especially common in Chinese markets for the Lunar New Year. Pick some up—you may not get rich, but you will have scored a delicious find.

Continued on page 16



TRY THIS KUMQUATS

What they are

Classified in the genus *Fortunella* (named for Robert Fortune, the botanist who brought kumquats from China to the West in the mid-1800s), kumquats are part of the Rutaceae family, which also includes oranges, grapefruit, and lemons. “Kumquat” refers to both a small, shrub-like tree with dark-green leaves and to the fruit the tree produces. The most widely available variety of kumquat in the United States is the orange, oval, tart Nagami, which is typically 1 to 2 inches long and cultivated in California, Florida, and Texas.

How to buy and store them

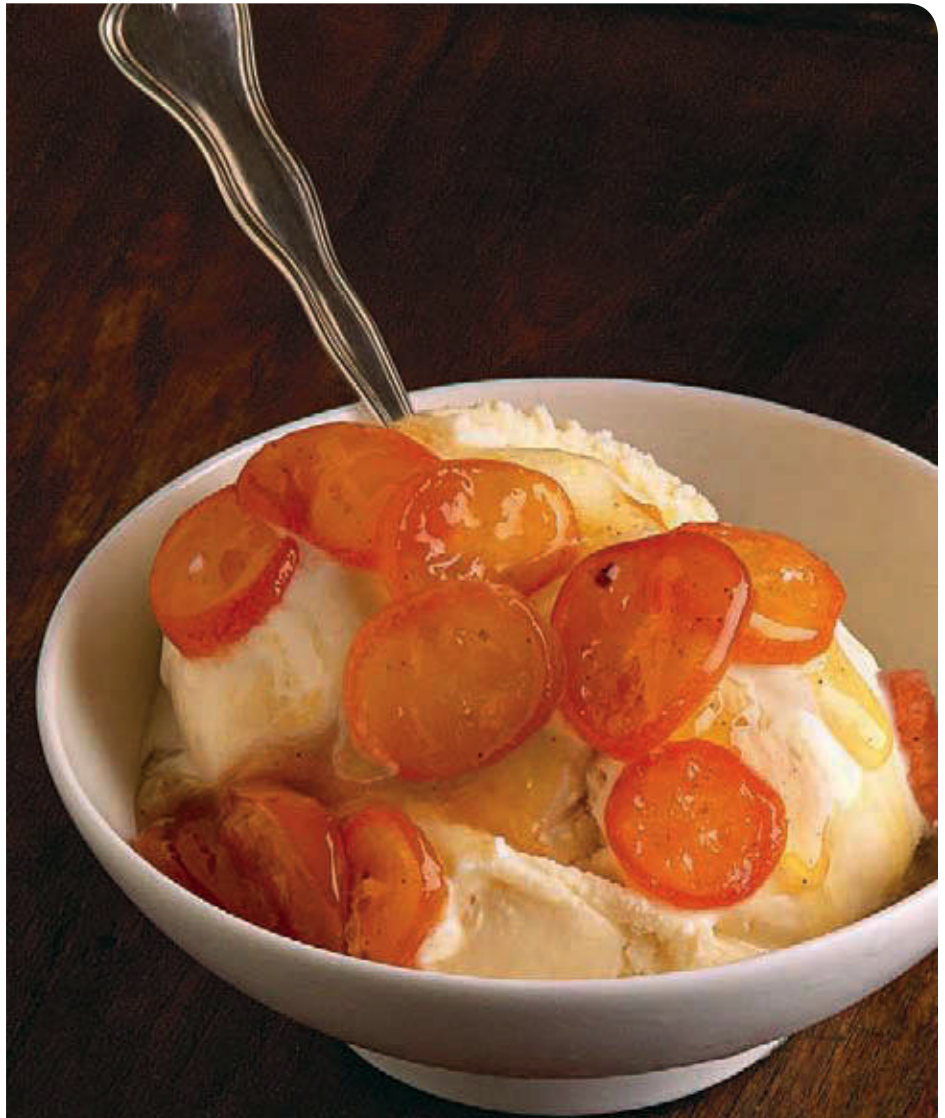
Look for kumquats that are bright orange to almost red, with firm, smooth skin and leaves attached (a sign of freshness). Traces of green may indicate an unripened fruit. Store kumquats at room temperature for up to three days or refrigerate for up to two weeks.

How to use them

The sour flavor of kumquats mellows when cooked, and the fruit produces an intoxicating citrus aroma. Kumquats are often candied in sugar syrup and then added to baked goods, ice cream, or trifles. Kumquat marmalade or compote can be spread on toast or served with roasted duck. Simmer kumquats in citrus juice with a bit of honey, garlic, and herbs and serve alongside scallops or seared fish, or add them to a beef, pork, or chicken braise with dried fruit and spices. For a fresh take, thinly slice raw kumquats and add them to an escarole or spinach salad; chop and add them to a winter salsa or ceviche; muddle them with sugar for a bright cocktail; or simply eat them out of hand, the rind providing a sweet complement to the tart pulp. —*Evan Barbour*



Get information on hundreds of ingredients at FineCooking.com/ingredients.



kumquat-riesling sauce

Serve this sweet-tart dessert sauce over vanilla ice cream or pound cake.
Yields 3 cups

- 2½ cups Riesling**
- ¾ cup mild honey, such as clover**
- ½ cup granulated sugar**
- 3 ¼-inch-thick slices peeled fresh ginger**
- 1 3-inch cinnamon stick**
- ¼ vanilla bean, split lengthwise, seeds scraped out**
- 12 oz. kumquats (2½ cups), sliced ½ inch thick and seeded**

In a 4-quart saucepan, combine the Riesling, honey, sugar, ginger, cinnamon stick, vanilla bean and seeds, and ¼ cup water and bring to a boil over high heat. Add the kumquats and reduce the heat to medium low. Cook until the kumquats are tender and translucent and the liquid is syrupy, about 30 minutes. Cool and serve at room temperature (or cold if serving with ice cream). The sauce will keep in the refrigerator for about 2 weeks. —*Samantha Seneviratne*

AT THE MARKET

What we're cooking now

Fine Cooking editors (and a reader) share some delicious ideas for in-season ingredients.



Kiwi-Grape Juice

Using a juicer, juice 4 peeled kiwis, 1 cup green grapes, and 1 Granny Smith apple. Stir in lemon juice to taste and serve over ice.

—Denise Mickelsen

Chicken and Watercress Stir-fry

In a wok, fry thinly sliced shallots until browned; drain on paper towels and sprinkle with salt. Stir-fry sliced chicken breast; transfer to a plate. Stir-fry chopped garlic, ginger, scallions, and a pinch of chile flakes until aromatic; then add watercress and stir-fry until tender. Return chicken to wok, add your favorite stir-fry sauce, and cook until thickened. Garnish with the shallots. —Jennifer Armentrout



Spanish Potato Tortilla

In a large skillet, fry 3 thinly sliced large baking potatoes, 2 large onions, and chopped roasted red peppers in 1 cup olive oil until beginning to brown. Put mixture in a bowl, season with salt, and add 7 beaten eggs. Drain most of the oil from pan; reheat pan over medium-low heat. Add egg mixture and cook until mostly set but still wet on top, about 10 minutes. Using a plate, flip tortilla and cook the other side until set. Cut into wedges. —Melissa Denchak



Barley Soup with Fennel, Leeks, and Bacon

Cook a couple slices chopped bacon in a large pot until browned. Add chopped fennel, leeks, carrot, and garlic and cook until softened. Add 1 quart chicken broth, fresh thyme, a bay leaf, and 2 Tbs. barley and cook until barley is tender. Remove bay leaf and finish with grated Parmigiano and fresh lemon juice. —Rebecca Freedman



Moroccan Orange-Olive Salad

Trim peel and pith from 2 oranges and slice segments from membranes into a bowl. Add pitted black oil-cured olives. Combine olive oil and red wine vinegar with a bit of paprika, cayenne, salt, and black pepper. Toss the salad with the dressing and sprinkle with chopped parsley. —Lisa Waddle



Sautéed Kale with Coconut

Sauté thinly sliced onion with turmeric and mustard seeds. Add thinly sliced kale and unsweetened shredded coconut; cook until kale is just tender. Finish with fresh lime juice and season with salt and pepper. —Samantha Seneviratne



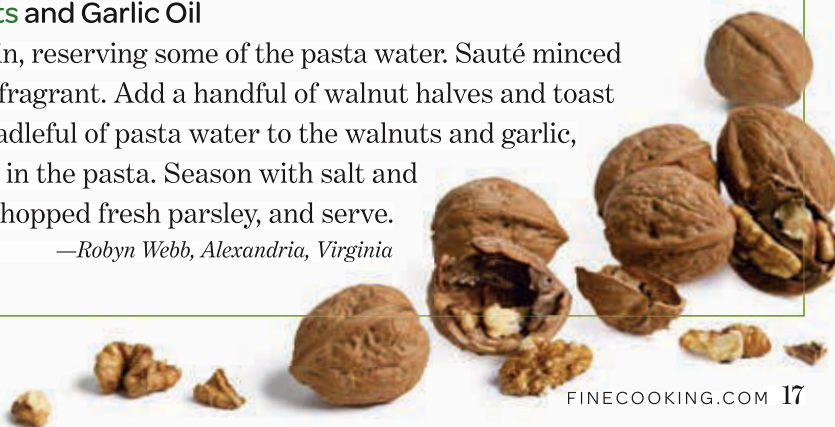
ONE READER'S SEASONAL SPECIALTY



Linguine with Walnuts and Garlic Oil

Cook linguine and drain, reserving some of the pasta water. Sauté minced garlic in olive oil until fragrant. Add a handful of walnut halves and toast until fragrant. Add a ladleful of pasta water to the walnuts and garlic, heat through, and mix in the pasta. Season with salt and pepper, garnish with chopped fresh parsley, and serve.

—Robyn Webb, Alexandria, Virginia





PRESERVING THE SEASON

Cabbage

This winter vegetable easily becomes kimchi, a bright, robustly flavored condiment that will last for weeks. **BY DEBRA SAMUELS**

CABBAGE IS A COLD-WEATHER STAPLE. Available in produce aisles year-round, it's at its peak in the cooler months of late fall and winter, when it adds crunch to salads, slaws, and stir-fries. Beyond those dishes, consider using it to make kimchi, a classic condiment found on every Korean table. Kimchi can be made with a variety of vegetables, but the most common type, *bae-chu*, uses napa cabbage, radishes, and Korean red pepper flakes. Our simplified recipe gets its start with a

spicy paste, which is mixed with salted cabbage, daikon radish, and aromatics. The mixture ferments at room temperature for 24 hours, at which point it can be eaten or refrigerated. It starts off spicy, crunchy, and refreshing, becoming hotter and more intensely sour as it ages (up to a month). Eat it on its own with rice, or use it in a variety of dishes (see the sidebar opposite). Before long, it might be a fixture on your table, too.

kimchi

Homemade kimchi paste provides the flavor base for this tangy, assertive condiment. Use leftover paste to make another batch of kimchi or add it to stews, soups, or sauces for a spicy kick.

**Yields 2 cups kimchi paste;
6 to 8 cups kimchi**

FOR THE KIMCHI PASTE

- 1 cup gochu garu (coarse Korean red pepper flakes; see *Where to Buy It*, p. 94)
- 3 Tbs. dark brown sugar
- 1 Tbs. kosher salt or sea salt
- 1 medium apple, unpeeled, cored and quartered
- ½ medium yellow onion, peeled
- 6 to 8 oil-packed anchovy fillets, drained
- 5 medium cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 oz. (about 1 inch) fresh ginger, peeled and thickly sliced

FOR THE KIMCHI

- 1 2-lb. napa cabbage, trimmed, cut lengthwise into 8 sections, then crosswise into 2- to 3-inch rectangular pieces (about 15 cups)
- 2 Tbs. plus 1 tsp. kosher salt or sea salt
- ¾ lb. daikon radish, peeled and cut into matchsticks (about 2 cups)
- 1 tsp. granulated sugar
- 8 to 10 scallions, halved lengthwise and then cut crosswise into 2-inch pieces
- 5 medium cloves garlic, cut into matchsticks
- 2 oz. (about 2 inches) fresh ginger, peeled and cut into matchsticks

MAKE THE KIMCHI PASTE

In a medium bowl, combine the gochu garu with ½ cup water. Add the sugar and salt and mix well. Set aside.

In a food processor, purée the apple, onion, anchovies, garlic, and ginger until smooth. Add the purée to the red pepper paste and mix thoroughly. Refrigerate the paste in an airtight container for at least 24 hours before using. It will keep for up to 3 months in the refrigerator.

PREPARE THE KIMCHI

Put a third of the cabbage in an extra-large bowl. Sprinkle with 2 tsp. of the salt. Top with another third of the cabbage and sprinkle with 2 tsp. salt. Repeat with the remaining cabbage and 2 tsp. salt. Put a piece of plastic wrap directly on the cabbage and then weigh down with four 1-lb. cans. Let the cabbage rest at room temperature for 3 hours.

Remove the cans, transfer the cabbage to a colander, rinse briefly, and let drain. Clean the bowl. Take handfuls of the cabbage, squeeze out any excess liquid, and put the squeezed cabbage in the bowl; set aside.

In a medium bowl, combine the daikon, the remaining 1 tsp. salt, and the sugar. Let rest for 15 minutes.

With your hands, rub the daikon strips until they're soft and pliable. Drain the daikon in a colander. Wipe out the bowl. Gather the daikon into a ball and squeeze out any liquid; return to the bowl.

Add the scallions, garlic, and ginger to the daikon and toss to distribute. Add the daikon mixture to the cabbage and toss again.

Open a gallon-size zip-top bag; set aside. Wearing disposable plastic gloves, use your hands to mix ¾ cup of the kimchi paste with the cabbage mixture. Be sure the cabbage mixture is thoroughly coated with the kimchi paste; season to taste with salt.

What Is Fermentation?

Like sauerkraut, kimchi is a fermented dish. The chemical work of fermentation is done in low oxygen conditions by lactobacillus bacteria (found naturally on cabbage). These microbes convert the natural sugars in cabbage to lactic acid, which helps preserve the cabbage (by preventing the growth of harmful bacteria) and gives the finished product its characteristic sour flavor.

Put the cabbage in the plastic bag. Remove and discard the gloves. Seal the bag three-quarters of the way.

Starting from the bottom of the bag, roll the bag forward to expel air. Try to prevent liquid from seeping out of the bag. When you have almost reached the top, seal the bag completely. Unroll the bag and put it on a baking sheet. Let the kimchi ferment at room temperature for 24 hours.

Transfer the kimchi and its liquid to a sterile wide-mouth 1.5-liter (or half-gallon) glass jar and refrigerate. (The kimchi should be stored in one jar, not divided into multiple jars.) It will be ready after 24 hours, though some may prefer the more fermented taste the kimchi acquires after 2 to 3 days. Kimchi will last in the refrigerator for at least 4 weeks.

Debra Samuels is a food writer, cooking teacher, and co-author of the book The Korean Table.



Find recipes that use kimchi at FineCooking.com/extras.



A jar of kimchi, a bowl of rice, and a cup of tea—one easy way to enjoy this Korean classic.

How to Use Kimchi

With its perfect balance of brightness, crunch, and heat, kimchi is a natural in many Korean dishes (and some non-Korean ones, too). While it's most often eaten with a bowl of rice (using chop sticks, pick up a piece of kimchi and fold it around a bit of rice, then pop the little bundle in your mouth), there are myriad ways to enjoy it. Here are a few:

- **Hot pot** Stir-fry kimchi in sesame oil. Add diced pork and water and cook until the meat is tender. Add tofu, heat through, and then serve with rice.
- **Side salad** Drizzle chopped kimchi with sesame oil, rice vinegar, and a little sugar.
- **Stir-fried noodles** Mix chopped kimchi with a bit of hot sauce, ketchup, and sesame oil. Toss with udon, rice, or Korean glass noodles.
- **Dumplings** Combine drained and finely chopped kimchi with tofu. Place small amounts of the mixture on dumpling wrappers and seal tightly. Steam or boil until cooked.
- **Scrambled eggs** Sauté kimchi until it develops a caramelized finish, add eggs, and scramble together.



sautéed celery with leeks and mushrooms

This savory sauté tastes just like stuffing, but without the bread. Serve it alongside roasted chicken.

Serves 3

- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 medium leek, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced crosswise (white and light-green parts)**
- Kosher salt**
- 8 oz. cremini (baby bella) mushrooms, quartered**
- 6 medium celery stalks, sliced ½ inch thick on the diagonal**
- 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice**
- 1½ tsp. finely chopped fresh rosemary**
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh sage**
- 2 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 Tbs. lower-salt chicken broth or water**

Heat a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the oil, leek, and a pinch of salt; cook, stirring often, until just tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the mushrooms and a pinch of salt and cook until the mushrooms are lightly browned and tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the celery and a pinch of salt and cook until crisp-tender, 5 to 8 minutes. With a wooden spoon, stir in the lemon juice and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Stir in the rosemary and sage and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in the parsley and season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer the mixture to a bowl. Return the pan to medium heat, add the chicken broth or water, and scrape up any remaining bits. Let the liquid reduce by half and then pour over the celery. Serve immediately.

BIG BUY COOKING

Celery

Making the most of a favorite food find from a warehouse store.

BY MELISSA PELLEGRINO

YOU KNOW THAT CELERY is great in tuna salad, slathered with peanut butter, or simply eaten out of hand, but to finish that big bag from the warehouse store, it helps to have a few delicious recipes in your cooking arsenal. Here, we've come up with three unexpected ideas that embrace celery's crisp texture and distinctive flavor: a creamy-crunchy salad, an elegant soup, and an herb-flecked sauté. Try these, and those wilted, forgotten stalks in the back of the crisper drawer will be a thing of the past.





cream of celery and celery root soup

This soup is smooth and delicate, and its elegant celery leaf garnish makes it a perfect first course for a dinner party. Adding celery root (a relative of celery) imbues the soup with even deeper celery flavor.

Serves 4 to 6

- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 6 cups thinly sliced celery (reserve ¼ cup celery leaves)
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
Kosher salt
- 3 cups peeled, small-diced celery root
- 6 cups lower-salt chicken broth
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 fresh or ½ dried bay leaf
- 2 Tbs. crème fraîche
Freshly ground black pepper
Canola oil for frying

In a 4-quart pot, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the celery, onion, and a generous pinch of salt. Cook until tender and just beginning to color, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the celery root and stir to coat with the butter. Pour in the chicken broth, and then add the thyme, bay leaf, and ½ tsp. salt. Bring to a boil; then reduce the heat and simmer until the vegetables are very tender, about 15 minutes. Discard the thyme sprigs and bay leaf and purée the soup in a blender until smooth. Pass the soup through a medium-fine sieve and transfer to a clean pot. Bring the soup back up to a simmer, whisk in the crème fraîche, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Keep hot.

Heat ½ inch of canola oil in a 1-quart pot over medium-high heat. Add the celery leaves and cook until crisp, 1 to 2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the celery leaves to a plate lined with paper towels.

Ladle the soup into bowls and top with the celery leaves.

The Big Buy

What: Trimmed celery bunches.

How much: A 4-lb. bag.

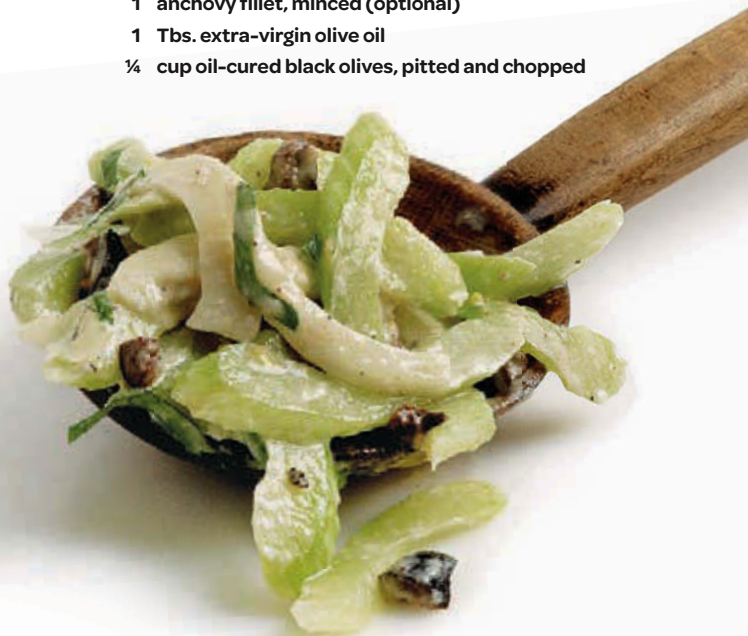
How to store: Wrap celery in foil and refrigerate. It will keep for at least two weeks.

celery, fennel, and black olive salad with parmigiano dressing

This crisp, creamy, and addictively good salad comes together in no time.

Serves 4 to 6

- 3½ cups thinly sliced celery (sliced on the diagonal)
- 1 small fennel bulb, cored and thinly sliced
- ¼ cup thinly sliced fresh flat-leaf parsley
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- 2 Tbs. mayonnaise
- 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
- 1 anchovy fillet, minced (optional)
- 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup oil-cured black olives, pitted and chopped



In a large bowl, combine the celery, fennel, and parsley. Season with a pinch of salt and a few grinds of pepper.

In a small bowl, mix the Parmigiano, mayonnaise, lemon juice, lemon zest, and anchovy (if using). Whisk in the oil until combined. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Toss the celery mixture with the dressing, fold in the olives, and serve.

Melissa Pellegrino is a Fine Cooking contributing editor. She's currently writing the sequel to her first book, The Italian Farmer's Table.





MAKE IT TONIGHT

Just 30 minutes to dinner, start to finish



lamb and sweet onion pitas with orange-cucumber salad

Ground lamb is often a bargain buy. Here, it's put to delicious use in an all-in-one meal of stuffed pita sandwiches and a bright, citrusy salad.

Serves 4

2½ Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil

1 medium sweet onion, halved lengthwise and sliced ¼ inch thick

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 lb. ground lamb

½ tsp. ground cinnamon

2 large oranges

1 small English cucumber, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced

2 Tbs. red wine vinegar

1 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh mint

2 pitas, halved and very lightly toasted

⅓ cup plain Greek yogurt

Heat 1½ Tbs. of the oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add about three-quarters of the onion, ½ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden-brown, 8 to 10 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the onion to a small bowl; set aside.

Cook the lamb, cinnamon, ¾ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper in the skillet over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally and breaking up the meat, until cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes; drain well.

Meanwhile, finely chop the remaining raw onion and transfer to a large bowl. Cut the peels and pith from the oranges. Working over a bowl to collect the juice, cut the orange segments free from the membranes. Cut the segments into chunks. Add the oranges, orange juice, cucumber, vinegar, mint, and the remaining 1 Tbs. oil to the chopped raw onion; toss to combine. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Fill the pitas with the lamb and cooked onions. Add some of the orange-cucumber salad and a dollop of yogurt. Serve the remaining salad on the side. —Liz Pearson

linguine with lemon-garlic shrimp

This easy pasta gets its luxurious creaminess from mascarpone, an Italian cream cheese.

Serves 3

Kosher salt

½ lb. dried thin linguine

1 lemon

1 lb. extra-large (26 to 30 per pound) shrimp, peeled and deveined

Freshly ground black pepper

2 Tbs. unsalted butter

3 medium cloves garlic, thinly sliced (1 Tbs.)

⅛ to ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes

¼ cup dry white wine, such as Pinot Grigio

½ cup mascarpone cheese

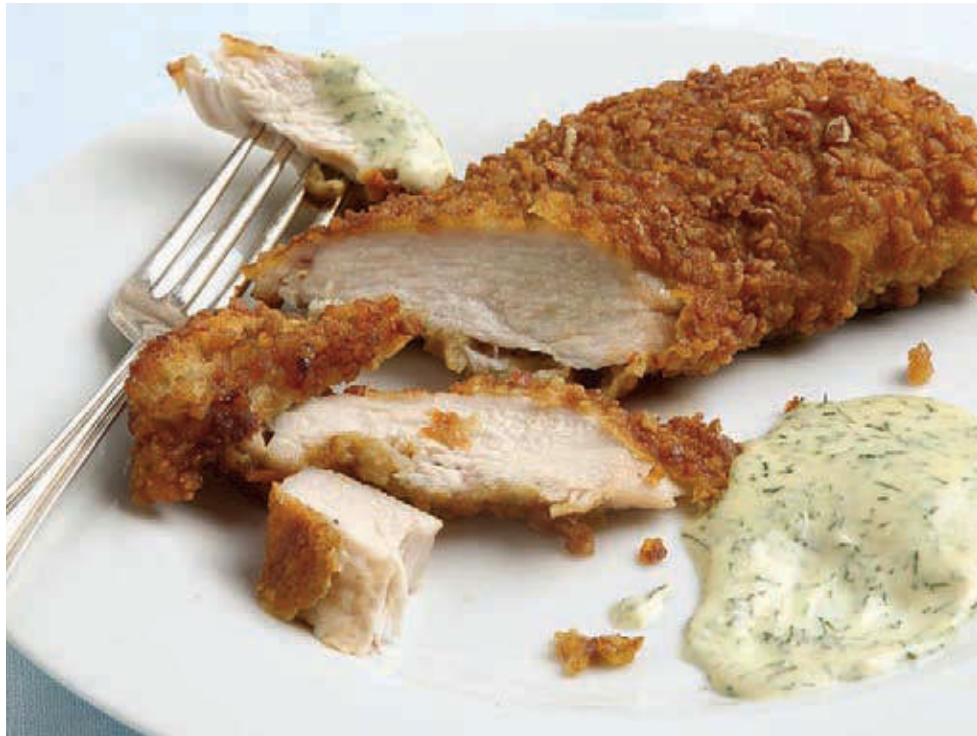
2 Tbs. thinly sliced chives

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat. Cook the linguine in the boiling water according to package directions until al dente. Reserve about ¾ cup of the cooking water and then drain the pasta.

Meanwhile, finely grate 1¼ tsp. of zest from the lemon and squeeze 2 Tbs. of juice. Toss the shrimp with ½ tsp. of the zest and ¼ tsp. each salt and pepper.

In a 12-inch skillet, melt the butter over medium-high heat until the foam subsides. Add the garlic and red pepper flakes and cook until the garlic just begins to brown, about 1 minute. Add the shrimp and cook until just opaque, about 3 minutes. Add the wine and lemon juice, bring to a boil, and cook until slightly reduced, 1 minute.

Add the drained pasta, mascarpone, and ½ cup of the cooking water. Toss well, adding more cooking water as needed, until the pasta and shrimp are coated and the sauce looks creamy. Remove from the heat. Toss in the remaining ¾ tsp. lemon zest and the chives. Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve. —*Melissa Gaman*



pretzel-crusted chicken breasts with mustard-dill dipping sauce

Ground pretzels make a great crunchy-salty coating for chicken. Serve with a red cabbage and apple slaw.

Serves 4

½ cup all-purpose flour

2 large eggs

¼ cup plus 1 Tbs. Dijon mustard

3 cups pretzels (not low-sodium)

3 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about 1½ lb.)

Freshly ground black pepper

½ cup mayonnaise

2 Tbs. finely chopped fresh dill

1 tsp. honey

½ cup vegetable oil

Put the flour in a wide, shallow bowl. In another wide, shallow bowl, lightly beat the eggs and 1 Tbs. of the mustard. Process the pretzels in a food processor until a coarse flour forms, about 30 seconds. Transfer the pretzel flour to a third wide, shallow bowl. Line up the flour, egg, and pretzel bowls in that order.

Put the chicken on a cutting board, and holding your knife parallel to the board,

split each breast in half horizontally.

Sprinkle both sides of the chicken lightly with pepper. Dredge both sides of the chicken in the flour, then the egg, and then the pretzel flour, coating well and shaking off the excess. Transfer to a baking sheet and refrigerate for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, mix the remaining ¼ cup mustard with the mayonnaise, dill, honey, and ½ tsp. black pepper; set aside.

Heat the oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot but not smoking, add three of the chicken breast pieces. Cook until the first side is dark brown, about 2 minutes. Carefully flip and cook until the chicken is cooked through and the second side is golden-brown, about 2 minutes more; if the chicken seems to be browning too fast, reduce the heat to medium. Transfer to a clean cutting board and cover to keep warm. Repeat with the remaining chicken.

Slice the chicken on the diagonal.

Divide the slices among four dinner plates and serve with the dipping sauce.

—*Dina Cheney*





french apple turnovers

Called *chaussons aux pommes* ("apple slippers") in French, these classic pastries—made here with frozen puff pastry—are a terrific weeknight treat. For added flavor, mix 2 Tbs. of chopped raisins with the apples or add a splash of brandy with the cinnamon and sugar. Serve with vanilla ice cream.

Serves 4

- 1 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 1 large sweet apple, such as Gala or Honeycrisp, peeled, cored, and thinly sliced**

- 1 Tbs. plus 1 tsp. granulated sugar**
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- Kosher salt**
- 1 large egg**
- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry (from a 17.3-oz. box), thawed overnight in the refrigerator and cut into four equal rectangles**

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F.

Melt the butter in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the apple slices and cook,

stirring often, until softened, about 4 minutes. Sprinkle 1 Tbs. of the sugar, the cinnamon, and ¼ tsp. salt over the apples; cook, stirring often, for 1 minute more. Remove from the heat.

In a small bowl, beat the egg with 2 Tbs. of water. Lightly brush the edges of each pastry rectangle with some of the egg wash. Spread the cooked apples and any juice over half of the long side of each rectangle, but not over the egg wash border. Fold the pastry half with-out apples over the side with apples, long side to long side. Press to seal the edges tightly and transfer to a large rimmed baking sheet.

Brush the tops with some of the remaining egg wash and sprinkle each with ¼ tsp. of the remaining sugar.

Bake until puffed and golden, about 16 minutes. Serve warm.

—Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough



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Stayed home with friends.

Explored new flavors.

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mashed sweet potatoes with mango chutney

Serve this slightly sweet side dish with roasted chicken, turkey cutlets, or pork chops.

Yields about 3 cups; serves 4

- 2 lb. sweet potatoes (about 3 medium), peeled and cut into ½-inch chunks**
- Kosher salt**
- ¼ cup jarred Major Grey's mango chutney**
- ½ cup heavy cream**
- 2 small scallions, thinly sliced (white and green parts separated)**
- 1 Tbs. finely chopped crystallized ginger**
- Freshly ground black pepper**

Put the sweet potatoes in a large saucepan. Add cool water to barely cover and a large pinch of salt. Boil over high heat until the potatoes are very soft when pierced with a fork, about 10 minutes. Drain the potatoes in a colander and return them to the saucepan. Set the pan over high heat and dry the

potatoes, stirring often, until any liquid has evaporated, about 30 seconds. Remove from the heat.

If the chutney contains any large chunks, finely chop them. In a small saucepan, bring the cream, chutney, scallion whites, ginger, ½ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper to a boil over medium-high heat. Remove from the heat.

Force the sweet potatoes through a ricer or a food mill and into a serving bowl (or mash for a chunkier texture). Stir in the warm cream mixture and season to taste with more salt and pepper. Sprinkle with the scallion greens and serve immediately. —Lori Longbotham



And it all started with McCormick® Gourmet Collection Ground Cumin.

McCormick Gourmet Collection Pork and White Bean Chili

Ingredients	2 tbsp. olive oil, divided	1 tsp. Ground Cumin	1 avocado, peeled, pitted and coarsely chopped
	1 lb. boneless pork loin, cut into 1-inch cubes	1 tsp. Garlic Powder	2 tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro
	2 cups chopped onions	1 tsp. Mexican Oregano Leaves	2 tbsp. fresh lime juice
	2 tbsp. Chili Powder	2 cans (15 1/2 oz. each) cannellini beans, drained and rinsed	
	1 1/2 tsp. Ancho Chile Pepper	1 can (14 1/2 oz.) chicken broth	

- Directions**
- HEAT** 1 tbsp. of the oil in large skillet on medium-high heat. Add 1/2 of the pork; brown on all sides. Remove pork from skillet. Repeat with remaining pork, adding additional 1 tbsp. oil as needed.
- STIR** onions into skillet and cook 4 minutes or until tender. Add seasonings; cook and stir 1 minute or until fragrant. Add pork, beans and broth; mix well. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low. Simmer, uncovered, 15 to 20 minutes or until pork is tender, stirring occasionally.
- MIX** avocado, cilantro and lime juice in small bowl. Serve chili topped with avocado mixture. Makes 4 servings.

For more great-tasting recipes, visit mccormickgourmet.com

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poached eggs with creamy brussels sprouts and bacon

Brussels sprouts and eggs may seem like a surprising combination, but in this classy version of poached eggs on toast they make a perfect pair.

Serves 4

- 1 tsp. plus 2 Tbs. cider vinegar**
- 8 slices bacon, cut crosswise
¼ inch thick**
- 4 slices country-style white sandwich
bread, halved diagonally**
- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter, softened**
- 1 large shallot, minced**
- 10 oz. (4 cups) medium Brussels
sprouts, trimmed and shredded
(use the slicing blade on a food
processor)**
- ¾ cup heavy cream**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground
black pepper**
- 8 large eggs**
- Shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano,
for garnish**

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Fill a 12-inch-wide, 2- to 3-inch-deep pan with 1½ inches of water and 1 tsp. cider vinegar. Bring the water to a simmer over high heat; reduce the heat as necessary to maintain a gentle simmer.

Meanwhile, cook the bacon in a 10-inch skillet over medium heat, stirring often, until browned and crisp, about 7 minutes.

While the bacon is cooking, spread one side of the bread triangles with 1 Tbs. of the butter and arrange butter side up on a small baking sheet. Toast in the oven until crisp and golden, about 10 minutes.

With a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to a paper-towel-lined plate to drain. Pour off all but 1 Tbs. bacon fat from the skillet. Add the remaining 1 Tbs. butter and the shallot to the skillet and cook over medium heat until softened, about 2 minutes. Add ½ cup water and the Brussels sprouts, cream, the remaining 2 Tbs. cider vinegar, and ¼ tsp. each salt and pepper; cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Cover the pan and cook, stirring occasionally, until the Brussels sprouts are just tender, 5 to 7 minutes.

While the Brussels sprouts cook, crack the eggs one at a time into a small bowl or teacup and then gently slide each egg into the simmering vinegar water. Poach until the whites are completely opaque but the yolks are still soft, 3 to 4 minutes. With a slotted spoon, remove the eggs from the water (in the same order they were added) and gently blot dry with a paper towel.

Put 2 toast triangles on each of 4 plates and top each toast with an egg. Season the eggs lightly with salt and pepper and spoon the Brussels sprout mixture on top. Sprinkle with the bacon and a few shavings of Parmigiano-Reggiano.

Serve immediately.

—Shelley Wiseman



quick chicken vindaloo

Vindaloo is an extremely spicy Indian curry dish; our version has heat but doesn't overwhelm. Serve with jasmine rice and store-bought naan.

Serves 4

- 1½ Tbs. curry powder**
- 2 tsp. hot paprika**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- 1½ lb. boneless, skinless chicken thighs, trimmed
and cut into ¾- to 1-inch pieces**
- 8 medium cloves garlic, minced**
- 4 Tbs. red wine vinegar**
- Kosher salt**
- 2 Tbs. canola oil**
- 1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced**
- 1 Tbs. grated fresh ginger**
- 1 14½-oz. can diced tomatoes, drained,
½ cup juice reserved**
- 3 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro**

In a small bowl, stir the curry powder, paprika, and ¾ tsp. black pepper. Put the chicken in a medium nonreactive bowl, sprinkle with 1 Tbs. of the curry powder mixture, about half of the garlic, 2 Tbs. of the vinegar, and ¾ tsp. salt; toss to coat. Set aside at room temperature.

Heat the oil in a 10- to 11-inch straight-sided sauté pan over high heat until shimmering. Add the onion and ¼ tsp. salt and cook, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon, until it softens and begins to brown around the edges, 4 to 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium high, add the ginger, the remaining garlic, and the remaining curry powder mixture and cook, stirring, until fragrant and well combined, about 45 seconds.

Add the tomatoes and mix to combine, scraping the bottom of the pan with the spoon. Stir in the chicken, reserved tomato juice, remaining 2 Tbs. vinegar, and ¾ cup water. Bring to a boil, cover partially, reduce the heat to medium, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the chicken is tender and cooked through, 15 to 20 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve sprinkled with the cilantro. —Dawn Yanagihara

The Reading List

New must-have reads for food lovers. BY KIMBERLY Y. MASIBAY

Grandi Vini

An Opinionated Tour of Italy's 89 Finest Wines

By Joseph Bastianich

Clarkson Potter, \$25

Joseph Bastianich lives and breathes Italian wine. He owns three wine estates in Italy and several restaurants and emporiums (some with Mario Batali, some with his mother, Lidia Bastianich) dedicated to Italian fare. With this, his third book on Italy's wines, he takes readers on an engaging romp through the country's enological landscape and zeros in on 89 outstanding bottles, telling the story of each with an insider's finesse: Learn the story of tilemakers turned wine producers, which slow-aged Italian sparkler rivals Champagne, and where to find the cypress-lined road that leads to an elegant, austere Chianti Classico.

My Calabria

Rustic Family Cooking from Italy's Undiscovered South

By Rosetta Costantino with Janet Fletcher

Norton, \$35

With this enchanting book, cooking teacher Rosetta Costantino offers a tour of her native Calabria, the rugged, mountainous region at the toe of Italy's boot. She serves up charming stories along with 150 recipes for the region's rustic fare. Calabrian Sweet Pepper Fritters, Pasta with Spicy Lamb Ragù, Chicken Soup with Ricotta Dumplings, and a bounty of traditional preserves are just a few of the delectables included in this beautifully photographed and well-researched tribute to Calabria's hard-working farmers, fishermen, winemakers, shepherds, and cooks.

India Cookbook

By Pushpesh Pant

Phaidon, \$50

Like the vast subcontinent itself, this cookbook could take a lifetime to fully explore. Written by Delhi-based culinary scholar Pushpesh Pant, who spent 20 years traveling the country's 10 major culinary regions and gathering authentic recipes from each, the book is a definitive guide to one of the world's most fascinating cuisines. Its 1,000 recipes cover it all: spice blends, snacks, and chutneys, as well as piquant main dishes, dals, breads, desserts, and drinks. Such abundance may seem dizzying at first, but dive right in: Pant's recipes are straightforward and clear, and he provides guidance on how to mix and match dishes to suit your taste.

Flour

Spectacular Recipes from Boston's Flour Bakery + Cafe

By Joanne Chang with Christie Matheson

Chronicle Books, \$35

Joanne Chang, owner of Flour, a trio of bakery-café in Boston, was born to bake. With her raging sweet tooth, passion for the simple beauty of iconic American desserts, a degree from Harvard, and years of rigorous training in top pastry kitchens, it's no surprise that Chang's first book is amazing. It contains invaluable chapters on baking techniques, equipment, and ingredients and, best of all, 150 of Chang's near-perfect recipes. From Flour's Famous Banana Bread, Sticky Sticky Buns, and Homemade Pop-Tarts to Chocolate Chunk Cookies and Blueberry-Lemon Pie, this is unfussy baking at its very best, and a must-have for novice and expert bakers alike.

what we're reading now

In *Four Fish: The Future of the Last Wild Food* (Penguin, \$26), environmental journalist Paul Greenberg examines the historic, current, and future impact of our insatiable desire for salmon, sea bass, cod, and tuna. He chronicles the overfishing of these species to the point of scarcity and the unintended consequences that fish farming has on the environment and genetic diversity. Greenberg is ultimately hopeful, though, and charts a course for more sustainable fish farming that looks to preserve the planet's dwindling stock of wild fish.

—Sarah Breckenridge, senior web producer



One Big Table

A Portrait of American Cooking

By Molly O'Neill

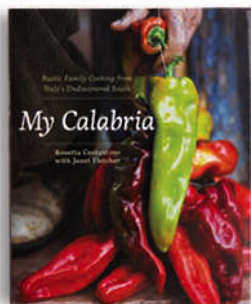
Simon & Schuster, \$50

It would take one big cookbook indeed to capture the richness of the American table, but with this colossal tome—nearly 900 pages in length, 5½ pounds in heft, and a decade in the making—former *New York Times* columnist Molly O'Neill pulls it off. The 600 recipes (selected from some 20,000 that O'Neill gathered from cooks across the nation) form a portrait of contemporary American cooking, albeit one that glimmers with history. In every recipe—like Bubby Frey's Famous Rooster Stew, Elisabetta Lecce Baiaomonte's Devilish Eggs, and Abuela's Mexican Flan—memory and nostalgia are essential ingredients. Ten chapters cover nibbles, savory mains, and sweets. Enjoy the feast.

Kimberly Y. Masibay is a Fine Cooking contributing editor.



Find recipes from these cookbooks and many more at FineCooking.com/extras.





DRINKS

The Comeback Kid

Vermouth, an underappreciated cocktail co-star, is about to get its due. **BY LIZA WEISSTUCH**

THE CLASSIC COCKTAIL REVIVAL is in full swing these days, and it's bringing vermouth back with it. For cocktail lovers, this is a very good thing.

Vermouth has been a staple bar ingredient since the cocktail era dawned in the late 19th century. In its heyday, lower-proof vermouth played a popular supporting role to stronger spirits like gin and whiskey. The classic martini (gin, dry vermouth, and bitters) and the Manhattan (whiskey, sweet vermouth, and bitters) are perfect examples. Vermouth, with its delicate herbal flavors, takes the boozy edge off the gin and softens the whiskey in these cocktails, and does so without changing the drink's structure too much (which can easily happen when you add juices or liqueurs). It dresses up the star spirit without overwhelming it. In short, it's the perfect co-star.

Vermouth, defined

But what exactly is vermouth? It's a wine that's been macerated with a garden's worth of botanicals, barks, and herbs (like marjoram, mace, orange peel, and wormwood, or *wermut* in German, from which vermouth takes its name). This aromatic wine is then fortified (which means extra alcohol is added to it) with neutral grape spirits. The resulting drink is balanced and complex, with flavors that can range from sweet to herbal to bitter.

There are two basic vermouth styles: dry and white, or French; and sweet and red, or Italian. The geographic reference indicates the style of the vermouth. And while both styles are made from white wines, sweet vermouth gets its dark red hue from the addition of caramel.

Vermouth plays a delicious supporting role in both the martini (above right) and the Manhattan (above left). Recipes are on page 30.

As a general rule (and every rule has its exceptions), sweet vermouths, which are more full-bodied, sweeter, and more bitter, hold their own against brawny, aged spirits like whiskey and brandy. Softer dry vermouths are more delicate and enhance the botanicals of white spirits like gin and white tequilas or rums.

The back story

In the late 18th century, in the former kingdom of Savoy (today's northern Italy and parts of southern and eastern France), a few clever entrepreneurs began enhancing not-so-great local wines with herbs and spices and fortifying the wine with more alcohol to preserve it. Vermouth was born.

Commercial production began in 1786, when Antonio Benedetto Carpano, a distiller in Turin, Italy, started selling his version of vermouth. Most people enjoyed it chilled as an

apéritif, a European tradition that continues to this day. In 1863, Martini & Rossi (today's titan vermouth producer), came out with its own sweet vermouth, also in Turin.

Joseph Noilly developed his dry French-style vermouth in 1813 in Marseillan, France. Over the next 40 years, Joseph's son, Louis, and his brother-in-law, Claudius Prat, got involved in what grew to become a global business, today's Noilly Prat.

A co-star is reborn

Given vermouth's rich, centuries-old European legacy and its major—albeit supporting—role in the early days of American cocktail history, it's astounding how maligned and neglected, misused and misunderstood vermouth has been over the past few decades. You might say it started with Winston Churchill, who, as legend has it, considered it sufficient to just look towards a bottle of dry vermouth when making his gin martini (instead of actually

adding vermouth to his glass). And then the 1990s hit, with that decade's unfettered enthusiasm for bland vodka cocktails. Vermouth, with its seductive aromatics, was too strong a character. Dust gathered on bottles of Noilly Prat and Martini & Rossi everywhere.

But all that's changing. The classic cocktail renaissance has moved from speakeasy-style bars in bigger cities to living rooms across the nation, thanks in no small part to the relentless popularity of television's *Mad Men*. People are mixing martinis and Manhattans with ice-jangling fervor and learning to appreciate vermouth's complexity.

So for your next 5 o'clock cocktail, try mixing an iconic Manhattan (page 30), in which vermouth's sweetness tames rye whiskey's bite. Or use dry vermouth to bring out the aromatics of your favorite gin in a crisp, cold martini (page 30). Either is a fitting showcase for the cocktail world's favorite co-star. *Continued on page 30*

Buying Guide: Vermouth

There is a rich assortment of vermouths to choose from, running the gamut from sweet to bitter, and from floral to crisply dry. Here are six bottles to try:

SWEET

Carpano Antica Formula, Italy (\$36/1 liter). This is the red, or rosso, vermouth that started it all. Still handcrafted, it has rich, spicy aromatics, an herbal, vaguely vanilla flavor, and a bitter finish.



Carpano Punt e Mes, Italy (\$20). This drier successor to the original formula (left) is more flirtatious in its initial sweetness and more aggressive in its bitterness. It delivers heady, earthy flavors and a pungent, raisin-like finish.



Martini & Rossi, Italy (\$6). This most widely available rosso vermouth is arguably the most serviceable for cocktails. Its spiciness is subtle, allowing the base spirit's individual character to shine through.



DRY

Sutton Cellars Brown Label, United States (\$18). Crafted from 17 local, organic botanicals, this unfiltered, French-style, small-batch brew calls to mind a wildflower bouquet dominated by chamomile and orange peel.



Noilly Prat Dry, France (\$10). The dry vermouth standard-bearer, this stalwart has an herbal nose, a rich body with a light kiss of oak, and a dry, Madeira-like finish that plays very well in a gin martini.



Dolin Dry, France (\$18). This wine is mellow and gentle, with a fresh nose, light body, and elegant finish. It's a fine introductory sipper or a subtle addition to a cocktail.





the martini

This classic cocktail blends half dry vermouth and half gin in the old-school fashion.

Serves 1

- 1½ fl. oz. (3 Tbs.) dry gin, preferably Beefeater London Dry
- 1½ fl. oz. (3 Tbs.) dry vermouth
- 1 to 2 dashes orange bitters
- 1 lemon twist

Fill a mixing glass with ice and add the gin, vermouth, and bitters. Stir approximately 50 times if using large ice cubes, 30 times if using smaller cubes. Strain into a chilled cocktail or martini glass. Garnish with the lemon twist.

the manhattan

Spicy rye whiskey is traditionally used to make a proper Manhattan, but if rye isn't to your liking, bourbon is an acceptable and tasty alternative.

Serves 1

- 2 fl. oz. (¼ cup) rye whiskey
- 1 fl. oz. (2 Tbs.) sweet vermouth
- 2 dashes bitters, preferably Angostura
- 1 maraschino cherry

Pour the whiskey, vermouth, and bitters into a mixing glass over ice. Stir for approximately 30 seconds. Strain into a chilled cocktail or martini glass. Garnish with the maraschino cherry.

Liza Weisstuch is a Boston-based drinks and lifestyle writer whose work has appeared in The Boston Globe, Whisky Magazine, and Imbibe.

Vermouth Know-How

BUYING

If you don't mix martinis nightly and aren't planning a party for this weekend, it's best to buy the smallest bottle of vermouth you can find, since the wine will eventually oxidize after opening.

STORING

Keep open bottles in the refrigerator, and try to drink the vermouth within six weeks for optimal flavor and aroma.

SERVING

Vermouth is a great mixer, but to best appreciate its distinctive flavor, drink it straight up, chilled, in a wine glass.



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GO SHOPPING

Great Finds

Our latest buys for the kitchen and table. BY MELISSA DENCHAK



Antique Charm

Wedgwood's lovely Cuckoo plate, made of fine bone china and trimmed with burnished gold, is the perfect size for small sandwiches or canapés. Its whimsical bird and flower design is inspired by 19th-century patterns from the company's archives. **\$50; wedgwood.com; 877-900-9973.**



Fork It Over

This seven-piece lobster set from kitchenware company WMF comes with a lobster cracker and six slender forks that will help extract every last morsel of tender meat. **\$69.99; wmfamericas.com; 800-966-3009.**

In Good Spirit

For more than 600 years, aromatic bison grass has lent its sweet, herbal essence to Zubrowka, a Polish vodka distilled from rye. Today, Zu Vodka carries on this tradition with a spirit full of grassy undertones, notes of vanilla, and a hint of spice. Mix it with apple cider or drink it all on its own. **\$29.99; sussexwine.com; 212-867-5838.**



Into the Pot

Le Creuset's first-ever cassoulet dish has the slope-sided shape of a traditional French cassoulet pot and a wide surface area that allows for plenty of crunchy crust. It comes with four serving bowls. **\$199.95 for the set; williams-sonoma.com; 877-812-6235.**



Photographs by Scott Phillips



Go Fish

This white-glazed stone-ware fish trivet by design guru Jonathan Adler keeps hot serving dishes off the table—but with a sense of humor. **\$38; jonathanadler.com; 800-963-0891.**

Prime Meat

Bold and aromatic, Salami della Musica is handmade in limited quantities by artisan salami-maker Cristiano Creminelli. With a mixture of pork, pork liver, and cloves, it tastes one part salami, one part rich pâté. **\$11.99 per stick; creminelli.com.**



Tea Time

With elegant curves and swooping spiral handles, Kähler's Storia tea service is a throwback to Art Deco design. The collection comprises seven brushed-black ceramic pieces, though we'd be happy with the jug alone. **\$52.95; urban-butik.com.**



TEST DRIVE

Pressure Cookers

Craving beef stew on a Tuesday? Use a pressure cooker to turn slow-cooking dishes into weeknight dinner options. Here are our top picks. **BY NICKI PENDLETON WOOD**

IT'S BEEN A GENERATION since pressure cookers were the sputtering, spewing monsters of the kitchen. Today's models are nearly foolproof, quiet, and easier than ever to use. These clever pots trap steam, which in turn builds pressure, creating higher cooking temperatures and reducing cooking times by up to 70 percent. You can use them for

almost any recipe that's based on moist heat, like a braise or a soup. A pot roast is ready in 35 minutes; dried beans in 20 minutes or less (see Test Kitchen, page 89).

The pressure cooker is certainly making a comeback, and this time, we hope it's here to stay. Here are our four favorites.



\$

Cuisinart Electric CPC-600, 6 quarts

\$100 at cuisinart.com

Unlike most pressure cookers, this is a plug-in countertop appliance, not a stovetop pot. It maintains pre-set pressure levels on its own and switches to warm when done cooking, making it a breeze to use and a great option for cooks who don't want to monitor a stovetop alternative.

It resembles a slow-cooker in design, with a touch-pad display (it has six settings—two for pressure cooking and the rest for nonpressurized cooking, like sautéing and simmering) and a heavy domed lid that latches securely into place and locks once pressure is reached.

This cooker comes to pressure more slowly than stovetop models, but its high pressure setting is great at tenderizing beans and tough meats: Beans cook in 20 minutes; chunks of beef chuck in 35. A trivet is included, and the cooker comes with a three-year warranty.



\$\$

Fagor Futuro, 6 quarts

\$140 at williams-sonoma.com

The pressure settings on the Futuro can be pre-set (as on the Cuisinart model at left), making it a good pick for those who want a cooker that can maintain a certain pressure level by itself.

Its lid has a big, easy-to-read dial with settings for low and high pressure, steam release, and regular cooking (without pressure, the cooker performs like a normal pot). After latching the lid into place, use the dial to select a pressure level, and place the cooker over heat. As pressure builds, the cooker self-locks and maintains the selected pressure setting.

Chunks of beef chuck cook in 15 minutes; wheatberries are tender in 22. The stainless-steel, pot-belly-shaped Futuro comes with a steamer basket and trivet, and with short, rounded handles, it's a cinch to store. Fagor offers a 10-year warranty.

What to Consider

Keep these things in mind when shopping for a pressure cooker:

Material Opt for corrosion-resistant stainless steel. Cookers with a thick, heavy bottom prevent foods from burning.

Pressure settings Most settings are measured according to psi, or pounds per square inch. Look for cookers that offer a low pressure setting of 8 to 9 psi (ideal for delicate foods such as fruits, vegetables, and seafood) and a high pressure setting of 15 psi (for

meat and grains). Most instruction booklets will indicate pressure settings and cooking times.

Handles Long handles keep hands far from a hot pot; short or rounded handles use less stovetop and storage space.

Pressure monitoring Some pots are self-regulating and allow the cook to pre-set the pressure level, so the heat needs adjust-

ment only if the steam released by the pot seems excessive. Other pots need monitoring as they reach the proper pressure, and then require the cook to adjust the heat to maintain the desired setting.

Size A four-quart cooker is sufficient for a batch of brown rice or some beans. A six-quart cooker holds large pot roasts.

How we tested

We tested eight four- to six-quart cookers by preparing wheatberries, dried beans, and beef chuck, noting how effectively the pots cooked each. We evaluated the cookers on how intuitive they were to use, how long they took to reach pressure and to cook food, their ability to distribute heat evenly, their pressure release and safety features, and the quality of materials used.



\$\$\$

Magefesa Mageplus, 4.2 quarts

\$175 at cookware.com

This pot functions like a traditional pressure cooker, meaning its two pressure levels must be manually maintained by the cook. But it's easy to do—a gauge indicates when the pot reaches low or high pressure. To maintain either setting, simply adjust the heat under the cooker. Wheatberries and beans are tender in less than 20 minutes; a whole chuck roast in 35. The Magefesa comes to pressure faster than other models and when finished cooking, can return to normal pressure in just 40 seconds (which helps prevent overcooking).

This cooker is also made with extra attention to detail: It has a hefty stainless-steel body, a heavier-than-usual sealing ring (which holds in the pressurized steam), and a lid that automatically snaps into pressure-cooking position when attached. The Mageplus comes with a steamer basket, a trivet, and a two-year warranty.

\$\$\$\$

WMF Perfect Plus, 4.5 quarts

\$229 at bloomingdales.com

The Perfect Plus has the sturdiest construction of all. It's made of thick stainless steel, with a lid that has a nice heft and slides into place better than other models. The ergonomic handle is wide and comfortable and has a sliding control that enables pressure cooking when set to one position and regular cooking when set to the other.

Like the Mageplus, the Perfect Plus requires the cook to adjust the heat to maintain the desired pressure level (either high or low). Wheatberries become tender-firm in 15 minutes, beans in 16, and a whole chuck roast slices easily after 35 minutes. The cooker comes with accessories for canning, multilevel cooking, and pressure steaming and is under warranty for three years.

Nicki Pendleton Wood is a cookbook editor and equipment tester who lives in Nashville.

HOW TO MAKE

Creamed Spinach

A classic side dish that all cooks should have in their recipe boxes. **BY SUSIE MIDDLETON**

CREAMED SPINACH IS A STEAKHOUSE TRADITION—a comforting, elegant side that sits perfectly between a juicy rib-eye and a fluffy baked potato. Want to skip the steakhouse? Making creamed spinach at home is as simple as wilting big leaves of fresh spinach, mixing them with a rich béchamel sauce (a white cream sauce, infused here with a bit of garlic), and stirring in some Parmigiano-Reggiano. It's a delicious dish that's worth staying in for.



The béchamel sauce thickens as it's whisked.

Need to Know

The spinach Choose big, crinkly leaves of mature spinach; they'll hold up in the cream sauce better than baby spinach. Remove any tough stems or damaged leaves and rinse the spinach two or three times to get rid of any grit.

The sauce Made with butter, flour, milk, and cream, béchamel is what holds the spinach together and gives it that silky richness. For creamed spinach with subtle garlic notes, infuse the cream and milk with garlic before making the sauce.

The tool Freshly grated nutmeg and Parmigiano pack a lot more flavor than pre-grated alternatives. Grate them yourself for better-tasting creamed spinach. You can use a box grater for both—grate the cheese on the small holes, and use the little crown-shaped protrusions for the nutmeg.

Tool Kit

Have these kitchen essentials on hand before you start the recipe:

- Liquid measuring cup
- Chef's knife
- Measuring spoons
- Box grater
- Dry measuring cups
- 6- to 8-quart Dutch oven
- Colander
- Dishtowel
- Cutting board
- 1-quart saucepan
- Whisk



COOK'S TIP

Drain thoroughly Excess liquid will dilute the béchamel sauce, so drain as much from the wilted spinach as possible. While it's in the colander, firmly press the spinach a couple of times with a dishtowel (but don't squeeze it to death); then blot the spinach again when it's transferred to a cutting board.



classic creamed spinach

With a subtle infusion of garlic and a bit of Parmigiano-Reggiano, this creamy side dish holds its own against the steakhouse competition.

Serves 4 to 6

- 2 lb. fresh spinach (mature crinkly leaves, not flat baby leaves), stems removed**
- Kosher salt**
- ½ cup whole milk**
- ½ cup heavy cream**
- 3 large cloves garlic, smashed and peeled**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- Freshly grated nutmeg**
- ½ oz. (1 Tbs.) unsalted butter**
- 1 Tbs. plus 1 tsp. all-purpose flour**
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano**

Wash the spinach thoroughly using 2 or 3 changes of water, but don't dry the leaves. Set a 6- to 8-quart Dutch oven over medium-high heat and add half of the wet spinach to it. Season with ¼ tsp. salt, cover, and steam,

tossing frequently, until wilted, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer to a colander in the sink and repeat with the remaining spinach.

Allow the spinach to cool in the colander for several minutes. Using a clean, folded dish-towel, press down on the spinach to remove as much water as possible. Let the spinach rest for a few more minutes and then press again to remove more water. Transfer the spinach to a cutting board, blot again with the towel, and chop very coarsely.

Put the milk, cream, and smashed garlic in a 1-quart saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat; then immediately remove from the heat and let sit for 10 minutes.

With a fork, remove most of the smashed garlic from the cream mixture, pressing the garlic against the side of the pan to squeeze out the cream. (It's fine if small pieces of garlic remain.) Transfer the cream mixture to a liquid measuring cup and add ½ tsp. salt, a few grinds of pepper, and a big pinch of nutmeg.

Wipe out the saucepan. Melt the butter in the pan over medium-low heat. Add the flour and cook, whisking constantly, until pale and smooth, about 1 minute.

Whisk in the cream mixture in a slow, steady stream. Raise the heat to medium and simmer the sauce, whisking constantly, until it thickens and reduces slightly, about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat.

Return the chopped cooked spinach to the Dutch oven and set over medium heat. Add the sauce and stir to combine. Add the Parmigiano and mix well. Continue to stir constantly until the spinach is hot, 1 to 2 minutes. Season with more salt and pepper and serve immediately.

Susie Middleton is Fine Cooking's editor at large.

A Pinch of Salt

Too much salt isn't good for you, but too little makes for a bland meal. Here's how to strike the right balance. **BY ELLIE KRIEGER**

"DEAR ELLIE, I'VE BEEN TRYING to cut back on sodium, so I made my favorite vegetable soup without salt, and it tasted terrible. Please help." So went an email I received from a reader not too long ago. My response: Add some salt—just not too much.

Truthfully, my answer wasn't quite so brief, but that was the essence of it. It was a little e-conversation that underscored a big issue: Most of us should be reducing the salt in our diets, but salt is critical to flavor. The trick is striking a balance that's both healthy and tasty.

Salt has been making headlines lately with some pretty startling numbers. On average, we take in 50 percent more than the daily recommended 2300 mg of sodium (which equals about 1 teaspoon of table salt). And because sodium increases blood pressure, which in turn contributes to stroke and heart and kidney disease, the impact of our salt habit has profound consequences. According to the experts at the Institute of Medicine, cutting back could prevent more than 100,000 deaths a year in the United States and save a lot more people from illness.

But salt's role in taste is profound, too—it does so much more than simply make food taste salty. It enhances sweetness and balances flavors by tempering bitterness. For example, salt in a cake erases the bitter undertones in the flour and leavening agents, allowing the sweetness and the nuances of spices and extracts to come through. Salt modulates moisture, drawing it into food (in a brine, for example), or pulling it out to concentrate flavor and texture. And at its most basic—as the emailer learned from her soup

experiment—salt combats blandness by enlivening flavor.

By removing salt from her soup entirely, the emailer was left with a bad-tasting dish, which is not only unacceptable to any food lover but also totally unnecessary. For most people, cutting back on salt by making little tweaks throughout the day—just enough to get down to that 2300 mg mark—could make a tremendous health difference, and if done right, allows for fabulous flavor (see Good To Know, at right). In fact, since about 70 percent of the sodium we get comes from processed, prepared, and restaurant food, simply cooking at home with fresh ingredients gives us a running start at cutting back on salt.

This Chili Con Carne is a perfect example of the additive power of these small changes. By starting with high-impact flavor elements—pure ground chile and freshly toasted and ground coriander and cumin seeds—you get maximum flavor and avoid the salt that's often added to packaged chili powder blends. Using aromatics, herbs, and citrus also punches up flavor, and convenient no-salt-added canned tomatoes and low-sodium beans let you maintain control over the salt level. To put it in perspective, compare this chili, which has around 900 mg of sodium in a generous serving, to the same amount of canned chili, which can have 2100 mg—nearly a day's worth. The numbers reveal the dramatic difference it makes to focus on robust flavor elements instead of leaning heavily on salt for taste. Less salt and more flavor—that's the kind of change you can live with.



"Since most of the sodium we get comes from processed, prepared, and restaurant food, simply cooking at home with fresh ingredients gives us a running start at cutting back on salt."

chili con carne

For the best flavor, plan to make this chili at least 1 day and up to 3 days ahead.

Serves 4

- 1 Tbs. whole cumin seeds
- 2 tsp. whole coriander seeds
- 1 Tbs. ground ancho chile
- 1 tsp. ground chipotle chile
- 1½ tsp. dried oregano, preferably Mexican
- 2 lb. boneless beef chuck, trimmed of all visible fat and cut into ½-inch cubes
- Fine sea salt
- 2 Tbs. canola oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 medium poblano, seeded and chopped
- 1 large jalapeño, seeded and finely chopped
- 3 medium cloves garlic, minced
- 1 14½-oz. can no-salt-added diced tomatoes
- 2 Tbs. fresh lime juice
- 1 15-oz. can low-sodium pinto beans, drained and rinsed

Good to Know

To cut the salt but keep the flavor, follow these four simple rules:

Get fresh Processed, packaged, and prepared foods are often high in salt, so opt for fresh ingredients and cook from scratch as much as possible.

Amp up other seasonings Don't lean on salt for flavor—look toward other seasonings. Try citrus and citrus zest, fresh and dried herbs, ground spices, ground chile peppers, vinegars, and aromatics like onions, garlic, and ginger.

Buy low-sodium With canned staples like beans, tomatoes, and broth, look for low-sodium options and check the labels; often a natural or organic brand will have considerably less sodium than conventional brands.

Add salt sparingly You need some salt for a delicious dish, but you probably need less than you're used to (especially if you're using salty ingredients like mustard, soy sauce, olives, capers, or cheese). Your taste buds will adjust over time to less salt, so start with three-quarters of the amount you usually use and reduce gradually from there.

- 1 avocado, cut into medium dice
- ¼ cup finely diced red onion
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro

Toast the cumin and coriander in a small dry skillet over medium heat, stirring frequently until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Transfer to a spice grinder and grind into a powder. Transfer to a small bowl and add the ancho, chipotle, and oregano.

Season the meat with ¼ tsp. salt. Heat 2 tsp. of the oil in a 6-quart pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add half of the meat and cook until well browned on all sides, about 5 minutes total.

Transfer the meat to a plate. Repeat with

another 2 tsp. oil and the remaining meat. After transferring the second batch of meat to the plate, add the remaining 2 tsp. oil to the pot. Add the onion, poblano, and jalapeño and cook, stirring, until softened, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute more. Add the spice mixture and cook until fragrant and well blended, 1 to 2 minutes more.

Return the beef to the pot, along with any accumulated juice. Add 2½ cups

water, the tomatoes and their juice, 1 Tbs. of the lime juice, and 1 tsp. salt. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat; then reduce the heat to low and simmer, covered, for 1½ hours. Remove the lid and simmer until the meat is tender, about 30 minutes more. Add the beans, raise the heat to medium high, and stir until the beans are heated through, about 5 minutes. Add the remaining 1 Tbs. lime juice and season to taste with additional salt.

Serve the chili garnished with the avocado, red onion, and cilantro.

*Registered dietitian
Ellie Krieger is a
Fine Cooking
contributing
editor.*





THE SCIENCE OF

Perfect Cookies

Answers to your burning baking questions. BY NICOLE REES

COOKIES SHOULD BE A CINCH TO BAKE, RIGHT? In reality, though, producing perfect cookies can be a challenge: Sometimes they're too flat or too dense, crisp when they're supposed to be chewy, or barely golden on top and practically burned underneath.

The good news is that cookies don't need to be so unpredictable. If you understand what's behind the making of a cookie and follow a few basic rules, turning out sheets of delicious, beautiful cookies will be a snap.

Why do my cookies darken on the bottom before they turn golden on top?

In a conventional oven, the heat conducted to the undersides of the cookies through the baking sheet is more intense than the heat radiating from the air around the top of the

cookies. If you have a convection oven, though, you've probably noticed that your cookies bake evenly. That's because the fans in these ovens circulate hot air more efficiently, allowing the cookies to cook and color uniformly.

If you don't have a convection oven, try baking cookies in the top half of your oven, away from the heat source but where the air is hottest. If baking more than one sheet at a time, be sure to rotate and switch their positions halfway through baking.

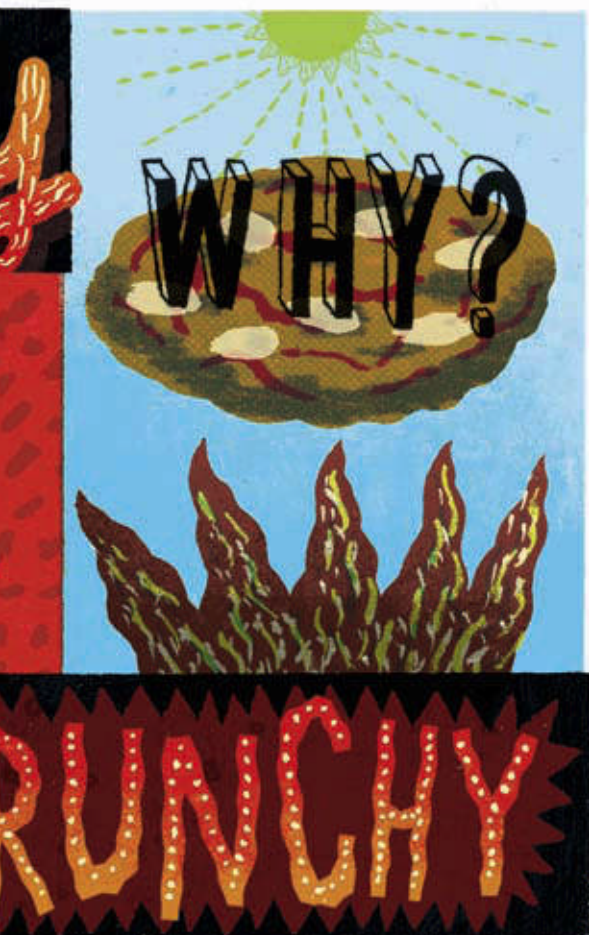
Also, avoid dark baking sheets, which cause more browning than lighter ones, and thin, flimsy cookie sheets. Insulated sheets (which are thick but lightweight, due to an inner air pocket) help prevent bottom browning. Heavy, light-colored sheets take longer to warm up and can therefore deter excess browning, too. If your baking sheets are on

the thin side, use silicone liners or bake your cookies on two nested sheets.

What happens if I replace shortening with butter in a cookie recipe?

You can replace some of the shortening, but don't omit it altogether. Shortening is a great emulsifier. As it's already processed to incorporate air and contains emulsifiers that help prevent air cells from collapsing, it helps keep dough aerated. With a higher melting point than that of butter, shortening also reduces spreading when the cookies are baked.

When it comes to flavor, though, shortening doesn't hold a candle to butter. Your best bet is to combine just a bit of shortening with butter, as in the sugar cookie recipe opposite.



What makes a cookie chewy or crunchy?

Chewy cookies contain more moisture than crunchy cookies. The first—and easiest—trick for turning out softer cookies is to bake them for less time. Pull them out of the oven when they're still moist in the middle. The cookies will continue to bake on the hot pan for the first minute or two they're out. (Conversely, to make chewy cookies crunchy, reduce their moisture by leaving them in the oven a little longer than the recipe advises.)

To keep your cookies moist and chewy for as long as possible, add a tablespoon or so of honey, corn syrup, or molasses to your recipe. These all contain fructose, a sugar known for attracting and retaining moisture from the air. In the recipe for sugar cookies at right, corn syrup is key to a chewy texture; without it, the cookies would become firmer and drier just a few hours after they come out of the oven.

Nicole Rees is a food scientist and professional baker who lives in Portland, Oregon.

sugar cookies, two ways

This master recipe is for chewy cookies, but with a little tweaking, you can make them crunchy. First, omit the corn syrup. This ingredient makes the chewy cookies soft, helps them spread, and promotes browning. Replace the corn syrup with granulated sugar, and increase the baking soda and decrease the baking powder for better browning. Flatten the dough with a glass to help it spread. Then lower the oven temperature to prevent overbrowning and extend the baking time to drive moisture from the dough.

Yields about 2 dozen cookies

Chewy	CRUNCHY
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 2 Tbs. granulated sugar 4 oz. ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) unsalted butter, softened but not meltingly soft 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) vegetable shortening, preferably trans fat free, softened $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt 1 large egg 1 Tbs. light corn syrup 1 tsp. vanilla extract 2 drops almond extract (optional) $9\frac{1}{2}$ oz. (2 cups plus 2 Tbs.) unbleached all-purpose flour 1 tsp. baking powder $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking soda White or colored (coarse) sanding sugar for rolling (optional)	1 cup granulated sugar; more for shaping
	omit the corn syrup
	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. baking powder
	$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. baking soda
	Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 325°F.
	Flatten the dough balls to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick with the bottom of a glass dipped in granulated sugar (re-dip the glass after each cookie). Bake one sheet at time until the tops are light golden and set, 15 to 18 minutes.
Position a rack in the upper third of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Line two rimmed baking sheets with parchment. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the sugar, butter, shortening, and salt on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 1 minute. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the egg, corn syrup, vanilla, and almond extract (if using) and mix on low speed (just to combine); then beat at medium speed for a total of 1 minute. In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, and baking soda to combine; then add to the mixer. Mix on low speed for 30 seconds, just to combine. Scrape down the bowl and then mix on medium-low speed for another 30 seconds to mix the dough uniformly. Gently roll the dough into 1-oz. balls (about 1 heaping Tbs. each). Roll the balls in sanding sugar (if using). Arrange at least $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches apart on the prepared baking sheets. Bake one sheet at a time until the edges are golden and the tops are cracked but not completely set, 13 to 15 minutes. Let the cookies cool on the sheet for at least 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.	





THE NEW ONE-POT DINNER

Break out of your old one-pot rut with these slow-cooked, soul-warming braises and stews. Five favorite chefs show us how. BY RAQUEL PELZEL

YOU'RE COLD. YOU'RE HUNGRY. You're craving something warm and hearty, but you also want something new and deliciously different. That's exactly what we got when we went to five brilliant chefs for their takes on one-pot cooking. Each outrageously tasty recipe is surprising, satisfying, and just what you want to eat on a cold winter's night.

cane vinegar chicken stew with pearl onions, oranges, and spinach



Chef: *Hugh Acheson*

Known for: *Fresh, light southern cooking*

Restaurants: *Five & Ten, The National, and Empire State South*

Where: *Athens and Atlanta, Georgia*

Hugh Acheson likes to combine classic French techniques with all things southern. Cane vinegar, which is made from sugar cane, is one of his favorite pantry ingredients for adding a malty, sweet-and-sour tang. If you can't find cane vinegar, you can substitute malt or cider vinegar. This vibrant, brothy stew is delicious over buttery mashed potatoes.

Serves 4

- 8 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (2½ to 3 lb. total)
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter
- ¾ lb. fresh pearl onions, peeled (see Test Kitchen, p. 89)
- 6 medium cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- ½ tsp. smoked sweet paprika (pimentón)
- 1½ cups cane vinegar
- 1½ cups lower-salt chicken broth
- 4 large navel oranges
- 6 oz. fresh spinach, stemmed (4 cups)
- 2 Tbs. chopped fresh mint

Season the chicken on both sides with 1½ tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper.

Melt the butter in an 8-quart Dutch oven or other heavy-duty pot over medium heat. Working in 2 batches, cook the thighs until golden on both sides, 4 to 5 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate.

Add the onions, garlic, and paprika to the pot and cook until the onions are soft, about 5 minutes.

Add the vinegar and use a wooden spoon to scrape up the browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Increase the heat to high and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium high and simmer until the vinegar is reduced by half, 7 to 10 minutes. Increase the heat to high and add the broth. When the liquid comes to a boil, add the chicken to the pot skin side up, reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer until the chicken is cooked through and tender, about 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, slice the peel off the oranges. Working over a medium bowl to catch the juice, cut the segments free from the membranes. Squeeze any remaining juice from the membranes into the bowl.

When the chicken is done, add the orange segments and juice, spinach, and mint to the pot, gently stirring them into the sauce. Divide the chicken and sauce among 4 bowls. Serve immediately.



braised duck legs with figs, star

Serves 6

- 6 12- to 16-oz. fresh duck legs, trimmed of excess fat
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 Tbs. canola oil
- 4 medium carrots, cut into 1½-inch pieces
- 2 medium celery stalks, cut into 1½-inch pieces
- 1 medium yellow onion, cut into 1½-inch pieces
- 6 medium cloves garlic, minced
- 1 lb. dried figs, stemmed and thinly sliced (about 3 cups)
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 whole star anise
- 1 2½- to 3-lb. winter squash (such as red kuri, buttercup, or kabocha), peeled, seeded, and cut into 1½-inch cubes
- 6 to 8 cups lower-salt chicken broth
- 1 Tbs. Champagne vinegar
- 2 Tbs. finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Season the duck legs with 1 Tbs. salt and 1½ tsp. pepper. Heat the oil in an 8-quart Dutch oven or other heavy-duty pot over medium-high heat for 2 minutes. Working in 2 batches, put the duck legs in the pot skin-side down and cook until the skin is very well browned and crisp, about 10 minutes (reduce the heat to medium if they brown too fast). Use tongs to transfer them to a large plate.

Food styling by Samantha Seneviratne

Chef: Koren Greiveson

Known for: Robust Mediterranean-inspired cooking

Restaurant: Avec

Where: Chicago

Koren Greiveson's use of duck legs in this hearty one-pot is inspired—they make the dish special without being difficult to prepare. Plus, the duck becomes meltingly tender as it braises, soaking up all of the rich flavors of the sauce. Steamed brown jasmine rice is the perfect accompaniment. Save any leftover duck fat to make roasted potatoes or French fries.

anise, and winter squash

Drain off all but 2 Tbs. of the fat from the pot (save the fat for another use).

Add the carrots, celery, onion, and garlic to the pot and cook over medium heat, stirring often, until the garlic is just starting to turn golden-brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the figs, thyme, and star anise, and then stir in the squash. Arrange the duck legs skin side up on top of the vegetables and add enough chicken broth to cover the duck by about ½ inch, up to 8 cups—it's fine if a few of the legs on top aren't completely submerged. Increase the heat to high and bring the liquid to a boil. Add 1 tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper, reduce the heat to low, cover the pot, and cook until fork tender, 1½ to 2 hours. Turn off the heat and let the duck rest in the juice for 15 to 30 minutes; then skim off and discard the fat from the surface of the sauce.

With a slotted spoon, distribute the vegetables among 6 plates or mound them on a platter. Top with the duck legs. Stir the vinegar into the sauce in the pot, and then drizzle the sauce over each serving, or serve the sauce on the side (you won't need it all). Garnish with chopped parsley and serve.

spiced rabbit tagine with peas and carrots

Serves 6

- 2** 2½-lb. rabbits, cut into 8 pieces each (see Test Kitchen, p. 89)
- 2** Tbs. ras el hanout (see Test Kitchen, p. 89)
Flaky sea salt (such as fleur de sel) and freshly ground black pepper
- ¼** cup plus 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1** small yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2** medium cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 6** long, slender carrots, trimmed, peeled, and sliced on the diagonal into 1½-inch pieces
- 2** cups frozen peas
- ½** cup finely chopped fresh cilantro

Put the rabbit in a large bowl. In a small bowl, stir the ras el hanout with 2½ tsp. salt and 1½ tsp. pepper; then sprinkle it all over the rabbit. Pour ¼ cup of the olive oil over the rabbit and turn the pieces to coat. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and marinate in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours or overnight.

Remove the rabbit from the refrigerator and let it sit at room temperature for 20 minutes. Heat a flameproof terra-cotta tagine, an 8-quart Dutch oven, or other heavy-duty pot over high heat. Peel back an edge of the plastic from the bowl and use the plastic to hold the rabbit back while you pour the oil from the bowl into the pot. Once the oil is hot, add half of the rabbit (about 8 pieces) meaty side down and cook until golden-brown, 3 to 5 minutes. Flip and cook until the other side is golden, about 3 minutes more. Transfer the rabbit to a rimmed baking sheet and repeat with the remaining rabbit pieces.

Reduce the heat to medium and add the remaining 2 Tbs. olive oil to the pot. Add the onion, garlic, and ¼ tsp. salt and cook, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon, until the onion is soft, 3 to 4 minutes.

Add ½ cup water and stir to scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot. Add the rabbit and carrots, cover, reduce the heat to low, and cook for 30 minutes. Remove the lid and rearrange the rabbit pieces so the ones on the bottom of the pan are now on the top. If the pan looks dry, add ¼ cup water. Cover and simmer until the rabbit is very tender, 30 minutes more. Stir in the peas and cilantro, increase the heat to medium, and simmer uncovered for 5 minutes. Serve immediately.



Chef: Sara Jenkins

Known for: Rustic Italian cooking

Restaurants: Porchetta and Porsena

Where: New York City

Sara Jenkins created this recipe based on her husband's memories of his Moroccan grandmother's cooking. She seasons the dish with ras el hanout, a heady spice blend used often in Moroccan cuisine. If you have a terra-cotta tagine, use it here; it will impart a subtle earthy flavor to the dish. Otherwise, a Dutch oven or heavy-duty pot works well. A whole chicken cut into 8 or 10 pieces is a fine stand-in for rabbit. Serve with roasted potatoes or fresh, crusty bread.



MALAYSIAN
CHICKEN AND RICE

"This is my kind of dinner—not too fussy, but a powerhouse of flavors. I love the crusty-brown rice from the bottom of the pan almost as much as the shot of chiles on top."

—ZAK PELACCIO,
FATTY CRAB, NEW YORK



BRAISED BEEF SHORT
RIBS WITH SALSA
VERDE AND FETA

"I have a reputation for short ribs, but these aren't my usual. They're still rich and comforting, but when you get that burst of acid, herb, and tangy feta from the salsa verde, you'll know you're in new territory."

—SUZANNE GOIN,
LUCQUES, LOS ANGELES



SPICED RABBIT
TAGINE WITH
PEAS AND CARROTS

"I've got this thing for ras el hanout, the Moroccan spice blend. It's really great in this dish, since it adds complexity to the delicate flavor of the rabbit, peas, and carrots."

—SARA JENKINS,
PORCHETTA, NEW YORK

BRAISED DUCK LEGS WITH FIGS,
STAR ANISE, AND WINTER SQUASH

"If I had to pick my top winter flavors—the ones that really work for me—they'd be the ingredients in this simple braise: star anise, squash, duck, and dried figs."

—KOREN GRIEVESON, AVEC, CHICAGO



CANE VINEGAR CHICKEN STEW WITH
PEARL ONIONS, ORANGES, AND SPINACH

"This crazy-easy recipe may have only 10 ingredients, but each packs a wallop: rich chicken thighs, sweet-and-sour cane vinegar, smoky pimentón, oranges, and mint, to name a few. Oh, and six cloves of garlic."

—HUGH ACHESON, FIVE & TEN, ATHENS, GEORGIA



Chef: Suzanne Goin
Known for: Mediterranean-
 accented California cuisine
Restaurants: *Lucques*, *A.O.C.*
Tavern, and *The Hungry Cat*
 (with her husband, David Lentz)
Where: Los Angeles

Suzanne Goin has been serving short ribs at Lucques since it opened 12 years ago, and her diners won't let her take them off the menu. In this version, they're braised in red wine and port until falling-off-the-bone tender. Then, in a surprisingly delicious twist, Goin tops them with a fresh, feta-spiked salsa verde, taking the dish to a whole new level. Round out the meal with a simple arugula salad and warm bread.

braised beef short ribs with salsa verde and feta

Serves 6

FOR THE SHORT RIBS

- 6 large beef short ribs (14 to 16 oz. each)**
- 1 Tbs. fresh thyme leaves, plus 4 whole sprigs**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- Kosher salt**
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped**
- 1 medium carrot, finely chopped**
- 1 medium celery stalk, finely chopped**
- 2 dried bay leaves**
- 1½ cups ruby port**
- 2 Tbs. balsamic vinegar**
- 2½ cups hearty red wine (like Zinfandel or Côtes du Rhône)**
- 6 cups homemade or lower-salt store-bought beef broth**
- 4 sprigs fresh flat-leaf parsley**

FOR THE SALSA VERDE

- 1 cup coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped fresh mint**
- 1 tsp. finely chopped fresh marjoram or oregano**
- 1 small clove garlic, chopped**
- 1 anchovy (preferably salt-packed), rinsed**
- ¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 Tbs. capers, drained and rinsed**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 3 oz. feta (preferably French), crumbled (½ cup)**

SEASON THE RIBS

Put the short ribs in a large mixing bowl and rub them with the thyme leaves and 1 Tbs. black pepper. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

Remove the ribs from the refrigerator and let sit at room temperature for 30 minutes. Rub 1 Tbs. salt all over the ribs and set them aside for another 30 minutes.

BRAISE THE RIBS

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 325°F.

Heat an 8-quart Dutch oven or other heavy-duty pot over high heat for 3 minutes. Pour in the olive oil, and when it just begins to smoke (after about 1 minute), add as many short ribs as will fit in the pan in a single layer. Sear on the three meaty sides until browned, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer the browned short ribs bone side up to a large bowl. Repeat with the remaining short ribs, reducing the heat to medium high if necessary.

Reduce the heat to medium, add the onion, carrot, celery, bay leaves, and thyme sprigs to the pan and cook, stirring to scrape up the browned bits from the bottom of the pan, until the vegetables begin to brown around the edges, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the port and balsamic vinegar and then the red wine. Increase the heat to high and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium high and simmer until the liquid is reduced by half, about 10 minutes.

Add the beef broth and return to a boil. Return the short ribs and any accumulated juice to the pot, making sure the vegetables are in the broth and not on the short ribs (the short ribs should be nearly submerged). Tuck the parsley sprigs in around the meat, seal the top of the pot with aluminum foil, and cover with the lid. Put the pot in the oven and braise until the meat falls away from the bone when poked with a paring knife, about 3 hours. Remove the short ribs from the oven and set aside for 30 minutes.

MAKE THE SALSA VERDE

While the short ribs are resting, combine the parsley, mint, and marjoram or oregano in a medium bowl and toss. Transfer about half of the herbs to a food processor, add the garlic, and pulse until very finely chopped, about five 1-second pulses. Add the remaining herbs and the anchovy and pulse about 3 more times to combine. While pulsing, pour about half of the olive oil into the food processor.

Put the capers in a medium bowl and use a fork to mash them. Using a rubber spatula, scrape the sauce from the food processor over the capers. Whisk in the remaining olive oil, 1 tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper, and then add the feta. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

FINISH AND SERVE

Use tongs to transfer the short ribs from the pot to a large platter. Cover the platter with foil. Strain the braising liquid through a fine sieve into a large bowl, pressing on the vegetables with the back of a ladle to extract as much liquid as possible. Skim the fat off the top and pour the liquid back into the braising pot. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat and cook until the broth is reduced slightly, 10 to 15 minutes.

Divide the short ribs among 6 bowls. Moisten with some braising liquid, drizzle with the feta salsa verde, and serve.

malaysian chicken and rice

Serves 4

- 5 Tbs. fish sauce
- 3 medium cloves garlic, finely minced
- 1 1½-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and finely minced
- 1 3-lb. chicken
- Sea salt
- 2 cups jasmine rice
- 3 Tbs. grapeseed oil
- 1 cup lower-salt chicken broth
- 4 Thai bird or 2 jalapeño chiles, thinly sliced crosswise
- 4 medium scallions, light-green and white parts thinly sliced crosswise; green tops sliced into 1½-inch-long slivers and submerged in cold water until serving
- 2 Tbs. unseasoned rice vinegar

Combine 2 Tbs. of the fish sauce with the garlic and ginger in a small bowl.

Put the chicken on a cutting board. Using a sharp cleaver or chef's knife, disjoint the chicken into drumstick, thigh, wing, and split-breast pieces. Chop each breast half crosswise into 4 pieces (you'll end up with 8 chicken breast pieces plus 2 wings, 2 thighs, and 2 drumsticks). Put the chicken in a large bowl and rub with 2 tsp. sea salt and the fish sauce mixture. Cover and refrigerate.

Line a rimmed baking sheet with a dishtowel and set it aside.

Put the rice in a large sieve, submerge the sieve in a large bowl of cold water and swish the rice with your fingers until the water turns milky. Lift the sieve out of the water, discard the water, and fill the bowl with fresh cold water. Repeat until the water is clear when the rice is swished, 2 to 3 more times. Shake as much water from the rice

as possible and then turn it out onto the towel-lined pan. Spread the rice in an even layer and set it aside to dry completely, 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Heat an 8-quart Dutch oven or other heavy-duty pot over medium heat for 2 minutes. Add the oil and the rice, spreading it out into an even layer. Let the rice sit for 1 minute, stir, and let it sit for another minute. Repeat until the rice is somewhat translucent, 2 to 3 more times. Add the chicken broth and 1 cup water. Increase the heat to high and bring the liquid to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pot, and cook for exactly 12 minutes.

Meanwhile, put the chiles in a small bowl and cover with the remaining 3 Tbs. fish sauce; set aside. Put the thinly sliced scallions in a small bowl and cover with the rice vinegar; set aside.

Arrange the drumsticks, thighs, and wings in a single layer on top of the rice. Cover the pot and cook for 10 minutes; then quickly add the breast pieces to the pot. Cover and cook until the chicken pieces are firm and spring back when lightly pressed, 40 to 45 minutes longer. Turn off the heat and bring the pot to the table.

Remove the scallion greens from the water, pat with a paper towel to dry, and put them in a small bowl. Uncover the chicken and rice and serve directly from the pot—be sure to serve each person some of the crusty, golden-brown rice from the bottom of the pot. Garnish with the scallion tops and serve with the chile-fish sauce and the scallion vinegar on the side.

Raquel Pelzel is a Brooklyn-based food writer and cookbook author. ■



Chef: Zak Pelaccio

Known for: Bold Southeast-Asian flavors

Restaurants: Fatty Crab and Fatty 'Cue

Where: New York City

Zak Pelaccio likes to wrangle big flavor from simple ingredients, and this dish is no exception. It may look unassuming, but trust us—it's a veritable flavor bomb. Spicy ginger, fresh garlic, and salty fish sauce add savory depth to the chicken, and the crisp layer of golden rice on the bottom of the pot is good enough to fight over. Serve with sautéed spinach or watercress.

What to Drink

These big-flavor dishes deserve a worthy wine match. Here are some suggestions to get you started.

Cane Vinegar Chicken Stew with Pearl Onions, Oranges, and Spinach

**Conti di Buscareto
Lacrima di Morro d'Alba
2009, Marche, Italy (\$23)**
Made from the Lacrima grape, this is a refreshing dry red that delivers the flavors of blueberries, lavender, and cream with mouthwatering acidity.

Braised Duck Legs with Figs, Star Anise, and Winter Squash

**Château Redortier
Beaumes-de-Venise
2004, southern Rhône
Valley, France (\$17)**
A supple, well-balanced, and elegant red with lots of bright fruit and a dash of peppery spice.

Spiced Rabbit Tagine with Peas and Carrots

**Henri Clerc & Fils
Bourgogne Blanc 2008,
Burgundy, France (\$22)**
This hand-harvested Chardonnay has pear and tropical fruit flavors on the nose, a lush body and texture, and a persistent finish.

Braised Beef Short Ribs with Salsa Verde and Feta

**Ash Hollow Nine Mile Red
2006, Walla Walla,
Washington (\$18)**
This Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot-Cabernet Franc blend offers bright notes of cherry and rose petal, a fruity nose, and a smooth cocoa finish.

Malaysian Chicken and Rice

**Tozai Snow Maiden
Junmai Nigori Sake,
Osaka Prefecture,
Japan (\$18)**
A creamy, velvety sake with bright, fresh aromas, floral fruits on the nose, and a complex finish.

GO FOR THE GRAIN

Far from run-of-the-mill, these delicious, easy-to-find grains will soon be your favorite pantry staples.

BY ANNA THOMAS

GRAINS ARE MY THING. I love them in any guise—from the dense, chewy rye breads of my Polish childhood, to the buttery, big-as-aprons buckwheat crêpes

I've eaten while walking the streets of France. There's hardly a whole grain I'm not partial to.

But I know that's not the case for most people. Sure, everyone knows wheat, corn, and oats, but what about amaranth or farro? Ever try teff? These utterly delicious grains and others, like quinoa and millet, can be found at many supermarkets, in health food stores, and online.



TEFF

FARRO

MIL

They're easy to cook, tasty, and good for you. They also keep for months, so they're great pantry staples.

To start, try making polenta with millet instead of corn—the Romans cooked millet that way for centuries, and its mild, sweet flavor just loves butter and cheese. Or add delicately crunchy quinoa to a salad for an interesting play on texture and flavor. A savory vegetable tart is

rich and nutty, thanks to a crust made with teff flour. Farro, a type of wheat, turns a typical pilaf into a chewy, satisfying side dish, while amaranth flour gives hearty griddlecakes a peppery kick (and a nutritional boost).

Getting to know these five grains will be a delicious discovery, and—if you're anything like me—they'll soon have a permanent spot in your pantry.



LET

QUINOA

AMARANTH



quinoa salad with apples, walnuts, dried cranberries, and gouda

With its dried fruit, walnuts, and apples, this sweet-and-savory dish is reminiscent of a Waldorf salad. It's a great meat-free lunch or side dish for dinner.

Serves 6 as a main course; 10 as a side dish

- 1½ cups quinoa, preferably red**
- Sea salt**
- 5 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil; more as needed**
- 1 large red onion, quartered lengthwise and thinly sliced crosswise**
- 2 Tbs. balsamic vinegar**
- 4 oz. arugula, trimmed and thinly sliced (about 3 cups)**
- 4 oz. aged Gouda, finely diced (about 1 cup)**
- 3 medium celery stalks, thinly sliced**
- 1 large, crisp apple, such as Fuji or Pink Lady, cut into ½-inch dice**

- 1 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped**
- 1 cup finely diced fennel**
- ¾ cup dried cranberries**
- 3 Tbs. sherry vinegar**
- Freshly ground black pepper**

In a bowl, rinse the quinoa with water, rubbing it between your fingers for about 10 seconds. Drain and transfer it to a 3-quart pot. Add 2½ cups water and ½ tsp. sea salt and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer, covered, until the quinoa is tender but still delicately crunchy, about 15 minutes.

Drain the quinoa and return it to the pot. Cover and let the quinoa rest for 5 minutes; then fluff it with a fork. Let cool to room temperature.

While the quinoa cooks, heat 2 Tbs. of the olive oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and a pinch of salt; cook, stirring frequently, until tender and brown around the edges, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the balsamic vinegar and toss with the onions until the vinegar cooks away, about 1 minute. Remove from the heat and let cool to room temperature.

In a large bowl, mix the quinoa, onions, arugula, cheese, celery, apple, walnuts, fennel, and cranberries.

In a small bowl, whisk the remaining 3 Tbs. olive oil with the sherry vinegar, ½ tsp. sea salt, and a few grinds of pepper. Add the dressing to the salad and gently mix it in. Let rest a moment; then season to taste with salt and pepper. Add more olive oil if the salad seems dry.

FIVE GRAINS TO TRY



TEFF	FARRO	MILLET	QUINOA	AMARANTH
<p>WHAT Teff is the smallest grain in the world. Native to Africa and an integral part of Ethiopian cuisine (it's used to make their national bread, <i>injera</i>), it can be white, red, and even purple. The most common variety is chocolate-brown. It's a nutritional powerhouse, full of iron and protein, and a good source of fiber and calcium.</p>	<p>WHAT Farro is part of the wheat family. Sometimes called emmer, it dates back more than 10,000 years and is widely cultivated across the Mediterranean. A high-protein grain, farro is also a good source of fiber, vitamin E, and minerals.</p>	<p>WHAT A small, round, yellow grain, millet is eaten daily in Africa and in its native Asia. Until recently, Americans used millet only as bird feed. It's an excellent plant protein, rich in iron, B vitamins, and several minerals.</p>	<p>WHAT Known as the "mother grain" of the Incan empire, quinoa (pronounced KEEN-wah) is a small, flat seed. It's a staple for millions in South America and is available in a gorgeous array of colors, from golden-tan to brick-red. It's an excellent source of protein and fiber, as well as iron, zinc, potassium, calcium, and vitamin E.</p>	<p>WHAT The tiny, gold, black-flecked seeds of the amaranth plant are an ancient food. At one time sacred to the Aztecs, amaranth has been cultivated for millennia in Central and South America. It's very high in protein, calcium, and fiber.</p>
<p>TASTES LIKE Teff's rich, distinctive flavor is reminiscent of hazelnuts to some, and artichokes to others.</p>	<p>TASTES LIKE Farro is subtly sweet and nutty, with an irresistible, chewy texture.</p>	<p>TASTES LIKE Millet has a mild, creamy flavor.</p>	<p>TASTES LIKE Quinoa is mild, sweet, and slightly astringent, with an intriguing texture that's both soft and crunchy.</p>	<p>TASTES LIKE Amaranth is grassy, herbal, and slightly peppery. The seeds have a pleasing crunchy texture.</p>
<p>COOK IT Whole teff can be cooked into a dark brown polenta, which can be sweetened and eaten with fruit as a breakfast porridge. You can also let it set up, cut it into wedges, and grill or sauté it to serve with savory foods. Teff flour, which is gluten-free, imparts its nuttiness and dusky cocoa shade to piecrusts, waffles, and other baked goods.</p>	<p>COOK IT Farro is sold whole, semi-pearled, and pearled. Try to find semi-pearled, which means some of the outer bran has been removed so the grain cooks quickly. It can be cooked like Arborio rice for a succulent "farrotto" or added to soups, pilafs, stuffings, and salads.</p>	<p>COOK IT Toast millet before cooking for the best flavor. It's most often cooked like rice, and it can absorb an astounding amount of liquid. For a light, fluffy pilaf, keep the liquid level low; for a creamy polenta-like dish, use more liquid and cook the millet longer.</p>	<p>COOK IT Quinoa seeds are coated in a bitter natural substance called saponin, which is usually washed off before the grain is sold; still, it's best to give quinoa a rinse before cooking. It cooks like rice (but more quickly) and makes an excellent addition to pilafs, soups, and salads.</p>	<p>COOK IT Amaranth seeds are typically cooked into a thick, glutinous porridge, which can be an acquired taste. The whole seeds can also be popped like popcorn. Amaranth is more versatile when it's ground into flour. It's gluten-free and delicious used in baked goods like pancakes, cookies, and quick breads.</p>
<p>STORE IT Whole teff can be stored in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for up to a year. Teff flour will keep in an airtight container at room temperature for up to three months, or frozen for up to six months.</p>	<p>STORE IT Store farro in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for up to a year.</p>	<p>STORE IT Millet will keep in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for up to a year.</p>	<p>STORE IT Store quinoa in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for up to a year.</p>	<p>STORE IT Whole seeds can be stored in an airtight container in a cool, dry spot for up to nine months. Amaranth flour can be kept in an airtight container at room temperature for up to three months, or frozen for up to six months.</p>
<p>GOES WITH Teff's toasty-nutty flavor goes well with ingredients both sweet and savory, like apples, winter squash, root vegetables, chicken, onions, corn, and brown sugar. It can also stand up to spicy foods.</p>	<p>GOES WITH Farro pairs beautifully with every vegetable it meets, as well as with pork products like bacon and sausage.</p>	<p>GOES WITH Millet is outstanding with rich ingredients like butter, cheese, and eggs, and spicy foods such as chiles and ginger. Greens and root vegetables are also great matches.</p>	<p>GOES WITH Quinoa is delicious with all kinds of fruits and vegetables, lean meats and fish, and nuts.</p>	<p>GOES WITH Pair amaranth with anything starchy, spicy, or sweet, like corn, black beans, chiles, honey, apples, and chocolate.</p>



corn and amaranth griddlecakes with spicy black beans

This hearty meatless main course is chock full of flavor and texture. The griddlecakes are crisp, tender, and slightly peppery from the amaranth flour, and the beans deliver a kick. Serve with sliced avocado and pico de gallo.

Yields about 8 griddlecakes and 2½ cups beans; serves 4

FOR THE BLACK BEANS

- ½ lb. dried black beans
- 1 Tbs. crumbled dried epazote, or 2 to 3 fresh epazote leaves (optional; for more information, see Test Kitchen, p. 89)
- 3 medium cloves garlic, peeled
- Fine sea salt
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- ½ to 1 Tbs. finely chopped chipotle chile (from a can of chipotles in adobo sauce)
- ½ Tbs. cumin seeds, toasted and ground

FOR THE GRIDDLECAKES

- 2½ oz. (½ cup plus 2 Tbs.) amaranth flour
- 1 oz. (¼ cup) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ¼ tsp. baking soda
- Fine sea salt
- 3 oz. (½ cup) medium-grind cornmeal
- ¼ cup pine nuts, roughly chopped
- 1½ oz. (3 Tbs.) unsalted butter
- ½ cup buttermilk
- 1 large egg
- 1 4-oz. can diced fire-roasted green chiles, drained
- ½ cup fresh or thawed frozen corn kernels
- ½ cup thinly sliced scallions (white and green parts)
- ½ medium jalapeño, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped
- Olive oil for the pan

MAKE THE BLACK BEANS

Rinse the beans and combine them in a 4-quart pot with the epazote (if using), garlic, and about 6 cups water. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring occasionally, then reduce to the heat to low and simmer, covered, until the beans are just tender, about 1 hour. (To cook the beans in a pressure cooker, see Test Kitchen, p. 89.) Add 1 tsp. salt and simmer gently for another 10 minutes. Remove the beans from the heat and let them cool in their liquid. (You can prepare the beans up to 1 day ahead; refrigerate them in their liquid.)

Drain the cooked beans, reserving the liquid. Return the beans to the pot and add the cilantro, chipotle, cumin, and about 1 cup of the reserved bean liquid. Simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes. The beans should be very moist; if necessary, add more bean liquid.

MAKE THE GRIDDLECAKES

In a large bowl, sift the amaranth flour, all-purpose flour, baking powder, baking soda, and ¾ tsp. salt. Whisk in the cornmeal and pine nuts.

Melt 2½ Tbs. of the butter. In a medium bowl, whisk the buttermilk, egg, and melted butter. Stir in the chiles.

Melt the remaining ½ Tbs. butter in a 10-inch nonstick pan over medium heat. Add the corn kernels, scallions, jalapeño, and a pinch of salt; cook, stirring, until the corn shows a few light-brown spots, about 5 minutes. Stir the corn mixture into the wet ingredients. (You can prepare the griddlecakes to this point up to 4 hours ahead.)

When ready to cook the cakes, combine the wet and dry ingredients, being careful not to overmix. Heat about 2 tsp. of olive oil in a large nonstick pan or on a griddle over medium-high heat. Drop ¼ cup of the batter at a time onto the hot pan and gently spread with the tip of a spoon to make 3-inch cakes. Cook the griddlecakes until tiny air bubbles begin to pop through the tops, 3 to 4 minutes; then flip them and cook until deep golden-brown and crisp on the bottom, about 3 minutes more. Transfer to a plate and keep warm. Repeat until all of the batter is cooked.

Ladle the beans into shallow bowls and top with the griddlecakes.

swiss chard, sweet potato, and feta tart in a teff crust

Adding teff flour to this tart's crust gives it the texture of shortbread and a rich, nutty flavor. The filling is vegetable heaven—chard, sweet potatoes, and red onions—topped off with a salty sprinkle of feta. Serve with a green salad to round out the meal.

Serves 8

FOR THE CRUST

- 5½ oz. (1 cup) teff flour
- 4½ oz. (1 cup) unbleached all-purpose flour
- ¾ tsp. table salt
- 6 oz. (¾ cup) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 4 to 5 Tbs. ice water

FOR THE FILLING

- 1½ lb. sweet potatoes (2 medium)
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 medium red onions, peeled, halved, and sliced lengthwise into ¼-inch-thick slices (4 cups)
- Sea salt
- 2 Tbs. balsamic vinegar
- 3 medium cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 large bunch Swiss chard (15 oz.), thick stems removed, greens roughly chopped (8 cups)
- 8 oz. feta, crumbled (1½ cups)
- Crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 large eggs
- Freshly ground black pepper

MAKE THE CRUST

Combine both flours and the salt in a food processor; pulse to combine. Add the butter and pulse until it breaks down to the size of small peas. Sprinkle 4 Tbs. of the ice water over the mixture and pulse again until the

pastry just holds together (if it's too dry to hold together, pulse in tiny amounts of the remaining water until it holds). Transfer the dough to a large sheet of plastic wrap, and using the plastic as an aid, shape it into a thick disk. Wrap the dough in the plastic and refrigerate for about 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F.

Unwrap and roll the dough on a lightly floured surface into a 14-inch circle. (If the pastry cracks, just press it back together.) Wrap the pastry around the rolling pin and unroll it over an 11-inch fluted tart pan with a removable bottom. Without stretching the dough, very gently work it into the pan, pressing the pastry against the sides. Roll the pin over the pan to trim the excess dough. Use the scraps as needed to make the edge even and about ¼ inch thick (at the narrowest points). Press gently all around the edge so the dough comes up slightly above the rim of the pan.

Prick the bottom of the crust all over with a fork, line with parchment, and fill with dried beans or pie weights. Put the tart pan on a baking sheet and bake until the edge looks dry, about 10 minutes. Carefully remove the beans and parchment and bake until the bottom is just set and looks dry, 5 to 7 minutes more. Cool on the baking sheet on a wire rack.

MAKE THE FILLING

Scrub the sweet potatoes, poke them once or twice with a fork, and put them on a small foil-lined baking sheet. Roast until tender when pierced, 50 to 60 minutes. Cool, peel, and cut into ¾-inch dice.

While the sweet potatoes are roasting, heat 2 Tbs. of the olive oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onions and a generous pinch of salt; cook, stirring, until the onions wilt and develop dark-brown charred spots, about 10 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium low, cover the pan, and stir frequently, until softened and caramelized, 8 to 9 minutes more. Add 1 Tbs. of balsamic vinegar and stir until it evaporates and glazes the onions.

Transfer the onions to a small bowl and wipe out the pan. Heat the remaining 1 Tbs. olive oil in the pan over medium-low heat. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant and just beginning to color, 1 to 2 minutes. Increase the heat to medium high, add the chopped chard and a pinch of salt, and toss over medium-high heat until the chard is completely wilted, about 4 minutes. Sprinkle the remaining 1 Tbs. balsamic vinegar over the chard and toss it until the vinegar cooks away, about 1 minute. Transfer to a large bowl.

Add the diced sweet potatoes, about three-quarters of the cheese, and a pinch of crushed red pepper to the chard; toss gently. In a small bowl, whisk the eggs with a pinch of salt and pepper and add the eggs to the chard mixture.

BAKE THE TART

Spread the filling evenly in the tart shell and scatter the remaining cheese on top. Bake the tart on the baking sheet until the cheese is nicely browned, 25 to 30 minutes.

Spoon the balsamic onions over the top of the tart, allowing bits of cheese to peek through here and there. Let the tart cool slightly, about 10 minutes; then remove the rim of the pan. Slice and serve the tart warm or at room temperature.





farro and beluga lentil pilaf with ginger and cilantro

Chewy farro and earthy lentils get a bright flavor boost from fresh ginger, cilantro, and rice vinegar in this satisfying vegetarian dish. Rice pilaf wishes it could be this delicious.

Serves 10 to 12 as a side dish

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil; more for garnish**
- 1 cup finely chopped shallots**
- 2 dried chiles de árbol, broken, seeds and stems discarded**
- 1 dried bay leaf**
- Sea salt**
- 1½ cups pearled or semi-pearled farro, rinsed**
- 2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves (or 1 tsp. dried thyme)**
- 2½ cups vegetable broth, preferably homemade (see Test Kitchen, p. 89, for a recipe)**
- ¾ cup dried beluga lentils, picked over and rinsed**
- 2 medium red onions, quartered and thinly sliced**
- 2 Tbs. balsamic vinegar**
- 1 cup thinly sliced scallions**
- ¾ cup grated carrots (use the large holes of a box grater)**
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro**
- 1½ Tbs. unseasoned rice vinegar**
- 1 Tbs. minced fresh ginger**
- 1 Tbs. granulated sugar**

Heat 2 Tbs. of the olive oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the shallots, chiles, bay leaf, and ¼ tsp. salt; cook, stirring often, until the shallots begin to color, 5 to 6 minutes. Add the farro and thyme and continue to cook, stirring, until the farro smells nutty and makes a crackling sound, about 3 minutes more. Add the vegetable broth and 2 cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a simmer, cover, and cook for 5 minutes. Stir in the lentils, cover, and cook undisturbed until the farro is tender but chewy, the lentils are tender but firm, and nearly all of the liquid is absorbed, 25 to 30 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat and let the pilaf stand, covered, for at least 5 minutes.

While the pilaf is cooking, heat the remaining 2 Tbs. olive oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onions and ½ tsp. salt and cook, stirring frequently, until limp and deeply browned in spots, about 10 minutes. Add the balsamic vinegar, toss quickly until the onions are evenly coated, and then reduce the heat to low, cover, and let the onions steam for about 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, combine the scallions, carrots, cilantro, rice vinegar, ginger, sugar, and ¼ tsp. salt. Let sit for 5 minutes to let the flavors meld.

Stir the onions and about three-quarters of the carrot mixture into the pilaf. Season to taste with salt.

Drizzle a little olive oil over the pilaf, garnish with the remaining carrot mixture, and serve.



Find more recipes using farro and quinoa at FineCooking.com/extras.



millet and cheddar polenta with roasted vegetables

Millet makes a rich, soft polenta, and sharp Cheddar highlights the mild, slightly sweet flavor of the grain. Roasted winter vegetables complete this warming vegetarian supper.

Serves 4

FOR THE ROASTED VEGETABLES

- 1 lb. cremini (baby bella) mushrooms, trimmed and halved if medium, quartered if large
- 1 lb. fresh pearl onions (any color), peeled (see Test Kitchen, p. 89), or frozen pearl onions, thawed
- 1 lb. Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
- 4 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 medium cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 Tbs. sherry vinegar

FOR THE MILLET POLENTA

- 1 cup millet
- 5 to 6 cups vegetable broth, preferably homemade (see Test Kitchen, p. 89, for a recipe)

1½ oz. (3 Tbs.) unsalted butter

4 oz. extra-sharp white Cheddar, grated (1½ cups)

Sea salt

Extra-virgin olive oil or melted butter, for serving (optional)

ROAST THE VEGETABLES

Position a rack in the top third of the oven and heat the oven to 450°F.

In a large bowl, toss the mushrooms, onions, and Brussels sprouts with 2 Tbs. of the oil, the garlic, thyme, 1½ tsp. salt, and a few grinds of pepper. Spread on a large rimmed baking sheet. Roast for 20 minutes, stir the vegetables, and continue roasting until tender and browned, about 35 minutes total. Transfer to a serving bowl and toss with the remaining 2 Tbs. oil and the vinegar.


MAKE THE MILLET POLENTA

Meanwhile, rinse and drain the millet. Put it in a heavy-duty 4-quart saucepan and stir over medium-high heat until it smells toasty and turns deeply golden, 7 to 8 minutes.

Add 5 cups of the vegetable broth and the butter and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cover. Allow the millet to simmer gently, stirring after the first 20 minutes and then every 7 to 8 minutes thereafter to prevent sticking, until it becomes a thick, creamy porridge with a chewy texture, about 35 minutes total. If it seems too thick, stir in a little more broth. Stir in the cheese and season to taste with salt, if needed.

Serve the polenta in wide, shallow bowls with the roasted vegetables on top. Drizzle a little olive oil or melted butter over each serving, if you like.

Anna Thomas is a cookbook author (and screenwriter) who wrote the seminal vegetarian cookbook, The Vegetarian Epicure, in 1973. Her latest book, Love Soup, was published in 2009. ■



*It's February 14th, and it's a Monday—
what's a food-loving romantic to do?
How about this indulgent,
ready-in-30-minutes*

Dinner for Two

vodka-steamed lobsters with tomato-thyme butter sauce

Steaming the lobsters with vodka, sugar, and salt gives the meat a subtle sweetness. The flavorful cooking liquid then becomes the base for a buttery dipping sauce. Serve with a green salad tossed with fresh pears, avocado, sliced prosciutto, and a simple lemon vinaigrette.

Serves 2

- ½ cup vodka
- 1 Tbs. granulated sugar
- Kosher salt
- 2 whole live lobsters (1¼ lb. each)
- 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small shallot, finely chopped (3 Tbs.)
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh thyme
- 1 medium clove garlic, minced
- Big pinch crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 Tbs. tomato paste
- 2 Tbs. cold unsalted butter, cut into 2 pieces
- Freshly ground black pepper

In a tall stockpot, bring 5 cups water, the vodka, sugar, and 1 tsp. salt to a boil over medium-high heat. Meanwhile, kill the lobsters.

Add the lobsters to the pot and steam, covered, until they're bright red and a small leg easily pulls away from the body, about 10 minutes. Transfer the lobsters to a platter and tent with foil to keep warm.

Discard all but 2 cups of the lobster cooking liquid. Vigorously boil the remaining liquid in the stockpot, skimming off any foam, until reduced to ½ cup, about 9 minutes.

Heat the oil in an 8-inch skillet over medium-low heat. Add the shallot, thyme, garlic, and red pepper flakes and cook, stirring often, until soft, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the tomato paste and cook, stirring, until it darkens slightly, about 1 minute. Add the reduced cooking liquid, increase the heat to medium, and simmer for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and swirl in the butter, 1 Tbs. at a time, until melted. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Serve the lobsters with the dipping sauce on the side.

—Denise Mickelsen



To watch a video on how to kill a lobster humanely, go to FineCooking.com/extras.

bittersweet chocolate pots de crème

This quick version of a classic French pudding comes together on the stovetop in minutes and then chills during dinner.

Serves 2

- ½ cup half-and-half
- ¼ cup whole milk
- 2 large egg yolks
- ½ cup bittersweet chocolate chips
- 2 Tbs. granulated sugar
- Kosher salt

Heat the half-and-half and milk in a small saucepan over medium heat until scalding hot. Meanwhile, whisk the egg yolks in a small bowl. Slowly whisk the hot milk mixture into the eggs.

Return the milk mixture to the pan, reduce the heat to low, and whisk until it thickens, about 1 minute. Remove from the heat and add the chocolate chips, sugar, and a pinch of salt; whisk until melted. Strain through a medium-mesh sieve into a medium bowl.

Divide the mixture between two 6-oz. ramekins or serving glasses. Refrigerate until set, at least 1 hour.

—Allison Fishman



VALENTINE'S
DINNER

Rosé cava sparkling wine

*Green salad with prosciutto,
avocado, and pears*

*Vodka-Steamed Lobsters with
Tomato-Thyme Butter Sauce*

*Bittersweet Chocolate
Pots de Crème*

For sources, see Where to Buy It



COOKING WITHOUT RECIPES

MEATLOAF

One simple method, endless flavor variations. BY ALLISON EHRI KREITLER



Make a meatloaf with any number of ingredients, from the basic (meat, eggs, bread) to the unexpected (spices, fresh chiles, dried fruit).

MEATLOAF IS MY FAMILY'S FAVORITE comfort food—that's one thing we can agree on. What we can't agree on is our favorite version. I like one with lots of spices, and my husband is partial to sausage and herbs. Dad is a traditionalist, which means beef, horseradish, and ketchup, and Mom goes for a leaner loaf made with turkey. Fortunately, my daughter likes everything I put in front of her. If your family is anything like mine, you're

in luck—this mix-and-match approach to meatloaf gives all of you a chance to choose your own ingredients.

The key to a delicious meatloaf is striking the right balance between bread and meat, which creates the perfect texture. From there, just add the ingredients you love, brush the meatloaf with a glaze (or wrap it in bacon!), and soon you'll have a tasty, satisfying dinner for friends and family—no disagreement there.

STEP 1

CHOOSE YOUR INGREDIENTS

Read the method from start to finish and then choose and prep your ingredients.

Yields 1 meatloaf; serves 8

STEP 2

COOK THE AROMATICS

- 2 Tbs. canola or olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 2 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
- Aromatic Add-Ins (optional)**

Heat the oil in a 10- to 12-inch skillet (use the larger skillet if using optional vegetable add-ins) over medium-low heat. Cook the onion and garlic and aromatic vegetable add-ins of choice (if using), stirring frequently, until


softened and just beginning to brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the aromatic liquid add-in (if using) and simmer briskly until almost dry, 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl and let cool until warm.



Cook the aromatics over medium-low heat to release their flavors.

Aromatic Add-Ins (optional)

For **vegetables**, choose one or two, small-diced or coarsely chopped, for up to 1 cup total. For **liquids** choose one, up to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup.

Vegetables		Liquids
		
Carrots	Celery	Red or white wine
		
Fennel	Fresh mushrooms	Stout, wheat, or Pilsner beer
		
Leeks	Bell peppers, any color	Dry sherry



You can use our interactive Recipe Maker to create your own meatloaf, and if you fancy some gravy with it, try our rich Sherry-Mushroom Gravy. Both are at FineCooking.com/extras.



STEP 3

SOAK THE BREAD

- 4 oz. sliced medium-coarse white bread such as Italian, French, Portuguese, or sourdough (preferably stale, with crust), cut into roughly 2-inch pieces (about 2½ cups)
- 1 cup whole milk

In a shallow dish that holds it in a single layer, soak the bread in the milk, flipping once, until soggy but not falling apart, 5 to 10 minutes, depending on the coarseness and freshness of the bread. Lightly squeeze a handful of bread at a time to remove some of the milk. Finely chop and add to the bowl with the cooked aromatics.

Soaking the bread in milk gives meatloaf its tender texture. The bread should be wet but not drenched, so squeeze it gently to remove excess liquid.

STEP 4

MIX THE MEATLOAF

- 2 lb. **Ground Meat(s)**
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- Mix-Ins** (optional)
- Herbs and Spices** (optional)
- 1 Tbs. Worcestershire sauce
- 2¼ to 2½ tsp. kosher salt (if adding sausage, cheese, or bacon, use the lesser amount)
- ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Ground Meats

Choose up to three.

Meats

**Beef or bison****Bulk sweet or hot Italian sausage,**
up to ¾ lb.**Pork,**
up to 1 lb.**Veal****Lamb****Turkey**
(not 100% breast meat)

Use your hands to gently combine the meat mixture without overworking it.

Mix-Ins (optional)

Choose up to three.

Dried Fruits

**Dried apricots, figs, or dates,**
very coarsely chopped,
up to ½ cup**Raisins (golden or dark),**
very coarsely chopped,
up to ½ cup**Currants,**
very coarsely chopped,
up to ½ cup**Capers,**
chopped, up to 1 Tbs.**Jalapeño pepper,**
seeded (optional),
finely chopped,
up to 1 heaping Tbs.**Horseradish,**
peeled and finely grated
fresh, or strained jarred,
up to ¼ cup packed

Flavor Boosters

**Fresh ginger,**
peeled and finely grated,
up to 2 tsp.**Lemon zest,**
finely grated,
2 lightly packed tsp.**Dried mushrooms,**
rehydrated and chopped,
up to ¼ cup**Scallions,**
sliced, up to ½ cup**Green or black olives,**
pitted and coarsely
chopped, up to ½ cup**Lime zest,**
finely grated,
2 lightly packed tsp.

Cheese

**Cheddar or Gruyère,**
grated, up to ½ cup**Blue cheese or feta,**
crumbled, up to ¼ cup**Parmigiano-Reggiano,**
finely grated, up to ½ cup











Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F.

Add the meat(s) and eggs to the bowl of aromatics. Scatter your choice of mix-ins, herbs, and spices (if using) over the meat,

and then sprinkle with the Worcestershire, salt, and pepper. Use your hands to gently mix all the ingredients until just combined—try not to compact the mixture as you do this.

Herbs and Spices (optional)

For **Herbs**, choose one or two for up to ¼ cup total. For **spices**, choose one or two.

Fresh Herbs	Spices	
		
Thyme, rosemary, tarragon, sage, dill, marjoram, or oregano, chopped, up to 1 Tbs.	Crushed red pepper flakes, ½ tsp.	Fennel seeds, coarsely chopped, 2 tsp.
		
Parsley, chopped, up to ¼ cup	Pimentón (smoked paprika), ¾ tsp.	Ground cinnamon, ¼ tsp.
		
Basil, chopped, up to ¼ cup	Hot chile powder, such as chipotle, ½ tsp.	Garam masala, 2 tsp.
		
Cilantro, chopped, up to ¼ cup	Ground cumin, 2 tsp.	Ground coriander, 2 tsp.
		
Chives, sliced, up to ¼ cup	Ground allspice, ½ tsp.	Mild chile powder, such as ancho, 1 Tbs.

STEP 5

TEST FOR FLAVOR

1 tsp. canola oil

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat the canola oil in a small skillet over medium-low heat. Form 1 Tbs. of the meatloaf mixture into a small patty. When the oil is hot, cook the patty on both sides until cooked through, about 5 minutes total. Transfer to a plate and let cool slightly. Taste and adjust the salt, pepper, and other seasonings as needed. Repeat until satisfied with the flavor.

STEP 6

COOK THE MEATLOAF

Line the bottom of a 9x13-inch baking pan with parchment. Transfer the meatloaf mixture to the baking pan and form into a 10x4-inch rectangular block (it becomes loaf shaped as it cooks). Spread your finish of choice over the top and lightly down the sides of the meatloaf (if using bacon, see Test Kitchen, p. 89).

Bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center of the meatloaf registers 160°F (165°F if it contains poultry), 40 to 55 minutes. If using bacon, broil the meatloaf about 6 inches from the broiler element until the bacon is brown and crisped, about 3 minutes. Let rest for 10 minutes. With a large spatula, transfer to a cutting board or serving platter and cut into ¾- to 1-inch-thick slices.

Finishes

Choose one.

Glazes or Bacon



Ketchup,
3 Tbs.



Honey,
2 Tbs.



Chipotle,
2 Tbs. ketchup
mixed with 1 Tbs.
puréed canned
chipotle in adobo



Bacon,
10 oz.
(about 9 pieces,
not thick-sliced)

The image displays four distinct meatloaves arranged in a 2x2 grid. Each meatloaf is shown in its entirety at the top and a cross-section at the bottom. The top-left meatloaf is dark brown with a honey glaze and contains visible red bell peppers. The top-right meatloaf is wrapped in thick, cooked bacon strips. The bottom-left meatloaf is a lighter brown color with a moist texture. The bottom-right meatloaf is covered in a thick, dark red sauce.

Our Favorite Meatloaves

Here are some delicious flavor combinations.

Indian-Spiced Lamb

Lamb, beef, carrot, red bell pepper, fresh ginger, jalapeño, cilantro, garam masala, honey glaze

Blue Cheese and Bacon

Bison, celery, blue cheese, bacon

Sausage, Lemon, and Parmesan

Beef, veal, sweet Italian sausage, white wine, lemon zest, Parmigiano-Reggiano, parsley, honey glaze

Southwestern Spicy Pork and Bell Pepper

Pork, bison, red bell pepper, jalapeño, lime zest, cilantro, cumin, mild chile powder, chipotle glaze



Double Mushroom and Sherry

Veal, pork, fresh mushrooms, dry sherry, dried mushrooms, thyme, sage, ketchup glaze



Turkey, Bacon, and Fennel

Turkey, fennel, white wine, scallions, fennel seeds, crushed red pepper flakes, bacon

Stout and Cheddar

Beef, veal, carrot, celery, stout beer, dried mushrooms, Cheddar, parsley, bacon



Greek Olive, Red Wine, and Feta

Lamb, red wine, lemon zest, black olives, feta, oregano, honey glaze





A photograph of several ripe yellow bananas lying on a large, dark green banana leaf. The leaf's veins are prominent and run diagonally across the frame. The bananas are bright yellow with some green at the stems, and they are arranged in a curved line on the left side of the image.

HELLO, YELLOW

When winter produce looks bleak, bananas are the bright spot in any supermarket—or kitchen. BY NICOLE REES

I USED TO THINK BANANAS were just snack food, a portable, pre-packaged solution to food on the run. Even when great midwinter fruits and vegetables were scarce, I overlooked the bin of fresh yellow bananas every time I scanned the produce department with dinner in mind. It never occurred to me to look at them through a cook's eyes.

That all changed when I wanted to add some spark to my cooking and looked to my Caribbean, Mexican, and Asian cookbooks for inspiration. Bananas cropped up everywhere, even in main courses. It makes sense that tropical regions, which grow bananas year-round, would find phenomenal ways to use them, but the dishes were a revelation to me. Fish curry with bananas? Delicious. Bananas with pork? Yum. I got the banana bug and kept cooking, even adding them to more familiar fare, like brownies. A little mashed banana in the batter, I discovered, made them rich and fudgy.

Now, I can't help but stop at that banana bin. It's my midwinter savior, a guarantee of fabulous sweet and savory meals to come.

thai-style halibut and banana curry with peanuts

This dish is ready in less than 15 minutes, thanks to jarred Thai red curry paste. Be sure to use underripe or barely ripe bananas, which are less sweet and hold together well in the sauce. Serve with jasmine rice.

Serves 2

- 1 cup well-shaken canned coconut milk (not light)
- 1 Tbs. Thai red curry paste
- 12 oz. skinless halibut fillet, about 1½ inches thick, cut into 2 pieces
Kosher salt
- 1 medium lime, zest finely grated, then halved
- 3 medium scallions, thinly sliced (white and green parts kept separate)

1 very large underripe or barely ripe banana (or 2 small), halved lengthwise, then cut crosswise into ½-inch half-moons

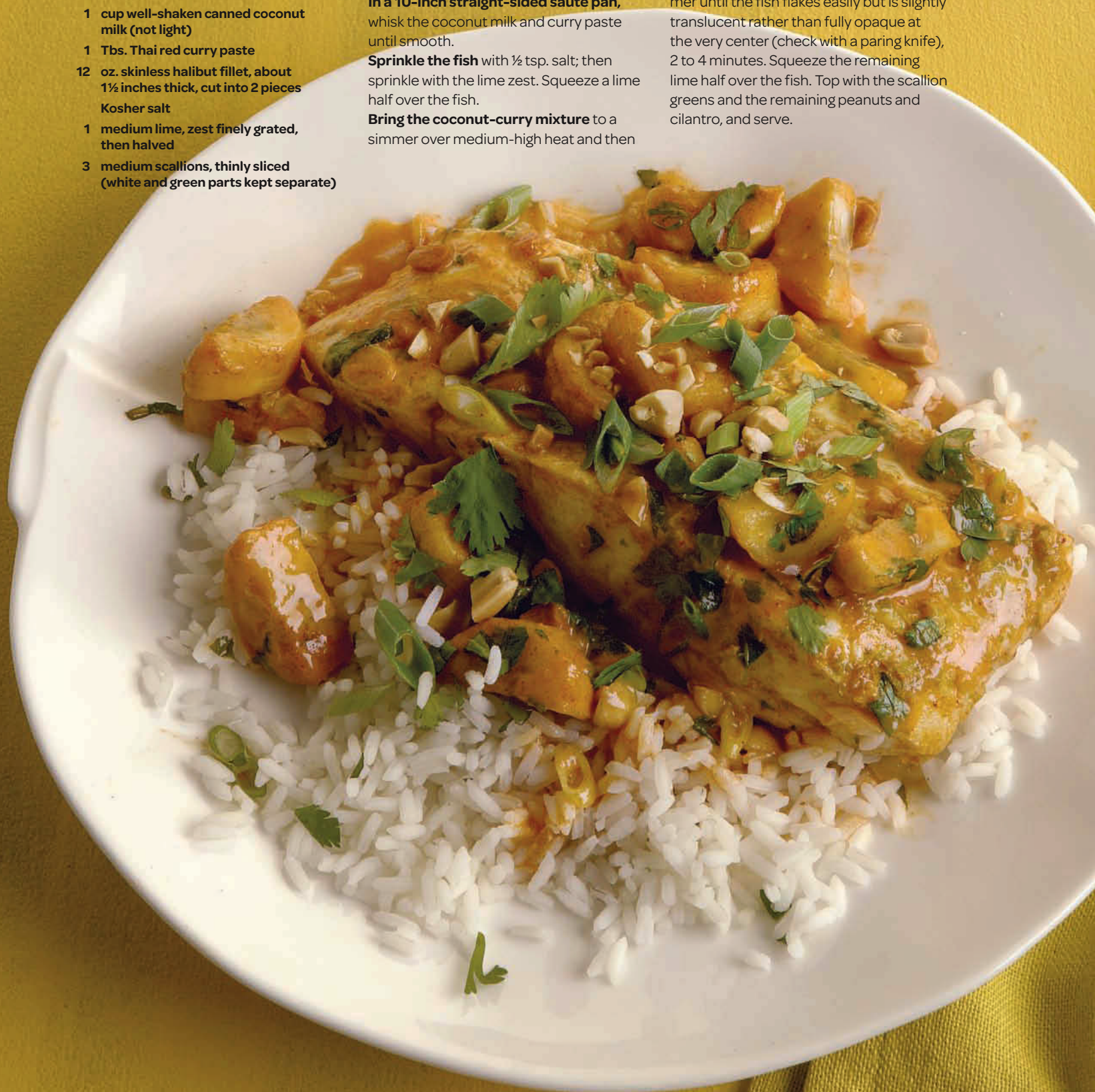
2 Tbs. chopped salted roasted peanuts
½ cup lightly packed chopped fresh cilantro

In a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan, whisk the coconut milk and curry paste until smooth.

Sprinkle the fish with ½ tsp. salt; then sprinkle with the lime zest. Squeeze a lime half over the fish.

Bring the coconut-curry mixture to a simmer over medium-high heat and then

arrange the fillets in the pan, skinned side down. Add the white parts of the scallions, cover the pan, and simmer, adjusting the heat as necessary, for 2 minutes. Add the bananas and half of the peanuts to the sauce. Sprinkle half of the cilantro over the top. Cover the pan and continue to simmer until the fish flakes easily but is slightly translucent rather than fully opaque at the very center (check with a paring knife), 2 to 4 minutes. Squeeze the remaining lime half over the fish. Top with the scallion greens and the remaining peanuts and cilantro, and serve.



lemon-glazed banana scones with crystallized ginger

Crystallized ginger and lemon zest complement the assertive banana flavor in these scones. While scones are usually best the day they're made, added moisture from the banana will keep these delicious for an extra day.

Yields 8 scones

FOR THE SCONES

- 9 oz. (2 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour; more as needed
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 2¼ tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. finely grated fresh lemon zest
- ¾ tsp. table salt
- 2¾ oz. (5½ Tbs.) cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 1 small ripe (but not mushy) banana, cut into ¼-inch dice (½ cup)
- 1 Tbs. minced crystallized ginger
- ¾ cup plus 2 Tbs. heavy cream; more for brushing
- Coarse white sanding sugar (optional; see Where to Buy It, p. 94)

FOR THE GLAZE

- 3 oz. (¾ cup) confectioners' sugar
- 1½ Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- ½ oz. (1 Tbs.) unsalted butter, softened
- Pinch table salt

MAKE THE SCONES

Position a rack in the top third of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F. Stack two rimmed baking sheets and line the top one with parchment.

In a large bowl, whisk the flour, sugar, baking powder, lemon zest, and salt. With your fingers, rub the butter into the flour mixture until a few pea-size lumps remain. Stir in the banana and the ginger. Add the cream; with a fork, gradually stir until the mixture just comes together.

Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and pat gently into a 7-inch circle about 1 inch high. Using a chef's knife or bench knife, cut the dough into 8 wedges. Transfer to the baking sheet, spacing the wedges 1 to 2 inches apart. Brush the tops with heavy cream and sprinkle liberally with sanding sugar (if using).



Bake until the tops are golden, 19 to 25 minutes, rotating halfway through baking for even browning. Transfer the scones to a wire rack and cool slightly, 3 to 4 minutes.

GLAZE THE SCONES

In a small bowl, stir the confectioners' sugar, lemon juice, butter, and salt until smooth. Drizzle the warm scones with the glaze. Serve warm or at room temperature.

The Life Cycle of a Banana

A banana's personality changes as it ripens. Here's how to match its stage of ripeness with the right dish or technique.

Underripe

- Stir-fries
- Stews
- Curries
- Substitute for plantains
- Deep fried

Barely ripe

- Stews
- Curries
- Casseroles
- Deep fried

Ripe

- Fruit salads
- Fruit tart toppings
- Bread or rice puddings
- Roasted

Very ripe

- Ice cream sundaes
- Cheesecakes
- Trifles
- Fillings for French toast, crêpes, or sandwiches
- Broiled, grilled, or flambéed

Overripe

- Smoothies
- Quick breads
- Pancakes or waffles
- Daiquiris or other cocktails

overnight banana sticky buns with pecans

Ripe bananas make this dough moist and fragrant and infuse the caramel-pecan sauce with rich flavor. Preparing the dough and the filling the night before means the buns just need to rise and bake in the morning.

Yields 12 sticky buns

FOR THE DOUGH

- 1 lb. (3½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour; more as needed
- 1 ¼-oz. package fast-rising (instant) yeast
- ½ cup very warm milk or water (about 125°F)
- ¾ cup mashed very ripe banana (about 1 large)
- 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter, melted; more for the bowl
- 2 Tbs. granulated sugar
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1¼ tsp. table salt

FOR THE FILLING

- 1½ oz. (3 Tbs.) unsalted butter, softened
- ½ cup finely chopped toasted pecans
- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- 1¼ tsp. ground cinnamon

FOR THE CARAMEL-PECAN SAUCE

- 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) cold unsalted butter; more softened for the pan
- 1½ cups granulated sugar
- 1 large ripe banana, coarsely chopped into ½- to 1-inch pieces
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- Generous pinch table salt
- 1 cup pecan halves

MAKE THE DOUGH

In a medium bowl, combine 4½ oz. (1 cup) of the flour with the yeast. Stir in the warm milk or water until combined. Cover the bowl and let sit in a warm spot in the kitchen for 30 minutes. Stir the banana, melted butter, sugar, egg, and salt into the yeast mixture until well combined. Stir in all but 1 oz. (¼ cup) of the remaining flour to make a stiff, shaggy dough. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface.

Knead, folding the dough over onto itself. If the dough sticks, use a dough scraper to pick up the sticky bits and sprinkle a small amount of the remaining flour onto the surface. Continue to knead until the dough becomes smooth and easy to handle, 5 to 10 minutes. Put the dough in a lightly buttered medium bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let rise in a warm place until doubled, 40 to 50 minutes.

FILL THE ROLLS

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and shape into a rectangle. Roll out into a 16x11-inch rectangle. With an offset spatula, spread the softened butter evenly over the dough to within ¼ inch of the edge. Combine the chopped pecans, brown sugar, and cinnamon in a small bowl; sprinkle the mixture evenly over the butter.

Roll up the dough lengthwise, starting from a long edge, and pinch the seam to seal. Turn the log so that its seam side down. Trim off and discard ½ inch from each end; then cut the log into twelve 1¼-inch pieces. Cover with plastic wrap.

MAKE THE CARAMEL-PECAN SAUCE

Generously butter a 12-cup standard muffin pan.

In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, combine the sugar and ¼ cup warm water and stir until the sugar dissolves, 2 to 3 minutes. Bring the syrup to a boil and cook, without stirring, until it begins to caramelize. Gently swirl the pan to help the syrup brown evenly. Once the syrup has turned an amber color, remove the pan from the heat and carefully stir in the banana and cold butter. Stir in the heavy cream, returning the pan to low heat if the mixture doesn't smooth



out immediately. Add the vanilla and salt and stir until smooth. Strain the sauce, discarding the banana. Let the caramel cool until just warm, about 15 minutes. Drizzle about 1½ Tbs. of caramel into each muffin cup, reserving the extra sauce at room temperature. Sprinkle the pecans evenly among the cups.

Place the dough slices over the sauce and nuts, cut sides down. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

BAKE THE STICKY BUNS

Remove the pan from the refrigerator and let the dough rise in a warm spot until doubled, 1 to 1½ hours.

Position racks in the center and lower third of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F.

Put the muffin pan on the center rack and set a foil-lined baking sheet on the rack below to catch any overflowing syrup. Bake until the tops and edges of the buns are browned, 20 to 22 minutes.

Immediately invert the pan onto a rimmed baking sheet, replace any pecans that fell off, and let cool for 10 minutes. Reheat the reserved caramel sauce and serve the buns drizzled with the sauce.



BANANAS: A BUYER'S GUIDE

HOW TO CHOOSE

Although there are hundreds of banana varieties, few are available in the United States. Supermarkets are dominated by a single variety, the yellow, mildly sweet Cavendish. But bananaphiles can take heart: Major companies like Dole and Chiquita are bringing more varieties to grocery stores. Ethnic markets are a great source for unusual bananas, too. Here are a few types you might find:

Manzano (or Apple Banana)

A small, squat variety with tangy apple and strawberry notes that turns dark yellow when ripe.



Red Banana

This short variety takes on a purple hue when ripe; its flesh is creamy white to pink, with a faint berry flavor.



Ladyfinger

Although it looks like a miniature Cavendish, it's sweeter when ripe.



Plantain

Extremely popular in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, this variety is starchy when unripe and is usually cooked (it's delicious fried or stewed). When its peel turns black, it's ripe enough to eat out of hand and is less sweet than the Cavendish.



HOW TO BUY

When purchasing the common Cavendish, look for a firm, evenly colored yellow peel that is flecked with brown and bruise-free. Bananas that are greenish-yellow will be ready to eat in a couple of days. See the sidebar on page 69 for ways to use bananas at all stages of ripeness.

HOW TO STORE

Store bananas at room temperature. It takes them five to seven days to go from green to yellow with lots of brown spots. To make green bananas ripen faster, put them in a paper bag with fruit like apples or avocados (they give off ethylene gas, which hastens the ripening process). Conversely, prevent bananas from ripening too fast by keeping them away from other aging fruit.

Banana hangers allow air to circulate evenly around the fruit, encouraging ripening and eliminating the bruising that can occur when bananas are left on the counter. Once bananas are ripe, store them in the refrigerator to slow overripening.

pork braised in banana leaves with manchamantel sauce

Banana leaves add a tea-like herbal note to the pork. The accompanying sauce, called manchamantel (or “tablecloth stainer”), is a specialty of Oaxaca, Mexico, and combines the sweetness of banana with smoky chiles, earthy pine nuts, and fragrant spices. Serve this pork as a taco filling along with tortillas, queso fresco, and avocados, or use it in pulled-pork sandwiches.

Serves 12

FOR THE PORK

- 1 Tbs. cumin seeds
- 1 Tbs. dried oregano, preferably Mexican
- 1 Tbs. sweet paprika
- 1 tsp. black peppercorns
- 1 bay leaf, preferably fresh
- 2 Tbs. packed light or dark brown sugar
- Kosher salt
- 4½ lb. boneless pork shoulder, cut into 16 pieces (2½- to 3½-inch cubes)
- 2 fresh or thawed frozen banana leaves (see *Where to Buy It*, p. 94)
- 1 28-oz. can whole tomatoes
- 5 medium cloves garlic, minced (about ¼ cup)

FOR THE MANCHAMANTEL SAUCE

- 1 8-oz. can pineapple chunks, drained
- ½ large white onion, cut into chunks (about 1 cup)
- 2 chipotle chiles in adobo sauce, seeds removed, plus 1 Tbs. adobo sauce
- 1 medium clove garlic
- 1 Tbs. smoked sweet paprika
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- Pinch ground cloves
- Kosher salt
- 1½ Tbs. bacon fat, peanut oil, or corn oil
- 1 small ripe banana, cut into chunks
- ¼ cup toasted pine nuts
- 1 tsp. fresh lime juice; more to taste

BRAISE THE PORK

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F.

Toast the cumin seeds in a small skillet over medium heat until fragrant; let cool. In a spice grinder, finely grind the cumin seeds, oregano, paprika, peppercorns, and bay leaf. Transfer the spices to a small bowl and stir in the brown sugar and 1 Tbs. salt. In a large bowl, toss the meat with the spice mixture to coat.

Rinse the banana leaves and pat dry. If using fresh stiff leaves, use tongs to briefly hold the leaves over a gas stove burner on medium heat, or under the broiler, moving them around constantly to avoid singeing, until they are flexible, 15 to 30 seconds. (If using frozen, this step is not necessary.)

Line a 6- to 8-quart Dutch oven with one of the banana leaves, allowing the excess to hang over the edge of the pot. Cross the second banana leaf over the first, again allowing the excess to hang over the edge. Spoon the pork onto the banana leaves.

Place a sieve over a medium bowl and drain the tomatoes, pressing them to extract the juice. Pour 1½ cups of the tomato juice over the pork. Reserve the tomatoes for the sauce and discard or save the remaining juice for another use.

Sprinkle the pork with the garlic. Cover the meat with the overhanging banana leaves and then cover the pot with its lid.

Braise the pork in the oven, basting occasionally with juices from the bottom of the pan, until fork-tender, 2½ to 3 hours.

With a slotted spoon, transfer the pork to a colander set in a bowl and let drain for 5 to 10 minutes. Discard the banana leaves and pour the pan juices into a fat separator or large measuring cup. Add any juice that drained from the meat and let sit until the fat rises to the top. Separate the fat from the juice and discard it. If there is more than 1 cup of juice, reduce it in the Dutch oven over medium-high heat to just about 1 cup; transfer to a heatproof container. Shred the pork into the Dutch oven; keep warm.



MAKE THE SAUCE

In a blender, purée the reserved tomato pieces, pineapple, onion, chipotles and adobo sauce, garlic, paprika, cinnamon, cloves, and ¼ tsp. salt until smooth. Heat the bacon fat in a 2-quart saucepan over medium heat. When hot, add the purée, cover, and simmer rapidly over medium to medium-high heat for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Reduce the heat to low and cook until the mixture thickens and darkens slightly, about 20 minutes. Let cool slightly; then return the mixture to the blender. Add the banana, pine nuts, and lime juice and purée until smooth. Add the reserved meat juices and more lime juice to taste. Add the sauce to the shredded pork, toss to coat, and reheat if necessary before serving.



Get information on hundreds of ingredients at FineCooking.com/ingredients.

banana split brownies

With a topping of marshmallows, crunchy almonds, and banana-infused ganache, these brownies are like a classic banana split, minus the ice cream. Adding an overripe banana to the batter keeps them moist for up to 5 days.

Yields 16 brownies

FOR THE BROWNIES

- 8 oz. (1 cup) unsalted butter; more for the pan
- 3 oz. (¾ cup) unbleached all-purpose flour; more for the pan
- 1¼ cups granulated sugar
- ½ tsp. table salt
- 3 large eggs
- ½ cup coarsely mashed overripe banana (about 1 medium)
- ½ tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 2½ oz. (¾ cup) unsweetened natural cocoa powder

FOR THE TOPPING

- ¾ cup plus 2 Tbs. heavy cream
- ½ cup coarsely chopped ripe banana (about 1 medium)
- 7 oz. semisweet or mildly bittersweet chocolate (55% to 62% cacao), finely chopped
- 2 cups mini marshmallows
- ¼ cup sliced almonds

MAKE THE BROWNIES

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Line a 9-inch-square metal baking pan with foil, leaving an overhang on two sides for easy removal of the brownies. Butter and flour the bottom and sides of the foil, tapping out the excess flour.

Melt the butter in a 3-quart saucepan over medium heat until it smells nutty and turns golden, 4 to 5 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and let cool for 5 min-

utes. Whisk in the sugar and salt, followed by the eggs, banana, and vanilla. Whisk in the cocoa powder and flour, mixing slowly at first and then more vigorously until the batter is combined.

Spread the batter in the prepared baking pan, smoothing it so it fills the pan evenly. Bake until a toothpick or a skewer inserted in the center of the pan comes out with just a few moist clumps clinging to it, 40 to 45 minutes. Let the brownies cool in the pan before topping.

MAKE THE TOPPING


While the brownies cool, bring the cream to a boil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Remove from the heat. Stir the chopped banana into the cream; let the mixture steep for 1 hour.

Put the chopped chocolate in a medium heatproof bowl. Bring the cream to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Pour the cream mixture through a strainer held directly over the bowl of chopped chocolate. Discard the banana. Let the chocolate mixture stand for 1 minute; then stir until smooth. Pour the ganache evenly over the cooled brownies.

Position a rack 6 inches from the broiler and heat the broiler on high. Cover the ganache with the marshmallows and almonds. Broil, rotating the pan every 20 seconds or so to keep the marshmallows from burning, until browned. Using a knife, free the marshmallow topping from the sides of the pan. Let the brownies cool in the pan until the ganache is set, at least 1½ hours. Using the foil overhang, remove the brownies from the pan and cut into 16 squares (use a wet knife to keep the marshmallows from sticking).

Nicole Rees is a food scientist and professional baker who lives in Portland, Oregon. ■



A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a bright red long-sleeved shirt and a white apron, is smiling at the camera. She is standing in a kitchen, leaning over a light-colored countertop where she is kneading a piece of pale yellow dough. She is wearing a pearl necklace, pearl earrings, and a black wristband. In the background, there are white kitchen cabinets and a red fire extinguisher. To the right of the woman, on the countertop, are some glass bowls and a metal strainer.

Eileen Yin-Fei Lo kneads the satiny dough used to make steamed pork buns (right) before filling and shaping it. Twisting the tops of the buns (opposite) seals them before steaming.

COOKING CLASS



Steamed Pork Buns

Cooking teacher, chef, and author
Eileen Yin-Fei Lo shows us
how to make a Chinese dim sum
specialty: fluffy buns filled with
sweet-and-savory barbecued pork.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY COLIN CLARK



“STEAMED BUNS were my favorite dim sum when I was little and we went to the village teahouse,” says Eileen Yin-Fei Lo. Called *jing char siu bau* in Cantonese, steamed pork buns—slightly sweet, airy buns filled with rich barbecue-roasted pork—come from Eileen’s native Guangdong province in southern China. They’re the first item you’ll be served at most Chinese dim sum restaurants, according to Eileen.

Steamed buns are so easy to make at home, there’s no reason to relegate them to restaurant fare. Eileen, a longtime cooking teacher and Chinese food expert, is the perfect person to show us how. In this class, she’ll demonstrate how to roast the pork for the bun filling and then make the filling itself. Next, we’ll learn how to make, fill, and shape the dough and cook the buns in bamboo steamers. “The best part,” says Eileen, “is how the buns will soften and open up like flowers while they steam.”

steamed pork buns

This recipe makes more barbecued pork than you need for the buns, but that’s a good thing because it’s a delicious, versatile ingredient to have on hand. Freeze what’s left to make another batch of buns or see Test Kitchen, p. 89, for more ideas on how to use it.

Yields 16 buns

FOR THE BARBECUED ROAST PORK

- 1 2-lb. boneless pork loin roast
- ½ cup honey
- ¼ cup oyster sauce
- ¼ cup hoisin sauce
- 3½ Tbs. double dark soy sauce or double black soy sauce (see Test Kitchen, p. 89)
- 3½ Tbs. light soy sauce (see Test Kitchen, p. 89)
- 3 Tbs. Shaoxing (Chinese rice wine)
- 1¼ tsp. five-spice powder
- Kosher salt and freshly ground white pepper

- 1 Tbs. dark soy sauce (see Test Kitchen, p. 89)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground white pepper
- 2 Tbs. peanut oil
- 1 small yellow onion, cut into ¼-inch dice (½ cup)
- 1 Tbs. Shaoxing (Chinese rice wine)
- 1½ tsp. Asian sesame oil

FOR THE DOUGH

- 10½ oz. (2¼ cups) bleached all-purpose flour, preferably Gold Medal; more as needed
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 3½ tsp. baking powder
- 6 Tbs. whole milk, at room temperature
- 2 Tbs. melted lard or peanut oil

FOR THE FILLING

- ½ cup lower-salt chicken broth
- 2 Tbs. oyster sauce
- 2 Tbs. ketchup
- 5 tsp. granulated sugar
- 4 tsp. cornstarch

B. Make the filling

In a medium bowl, stir or whisk the broth, oyster sauce, ketchup, sugar, cornstarch, soy sauce, ½ tsp. salt, and a pinch of pepper **2**. Finely dice enough of the barbecued roast pork to yield 1½ cups (about 6 oz.) **3**. Heat a wok over high heat for 30 seconds. Add the peanut oil and swirl to coat. When a wisp of white smoke appears, in about 30 seconds, add the onion. Reduce the heat to medium low and cook, stirring often, until golden-brown, about 6 minutes. **Add the pork**, increase the heat to high, and stir-fry to combine, 2 to 3 minutes. Drizzle the wine from the edge of the wok into the pork mixture and stir well. Reduce the heat to medium. **Make a well** in the center of the mixture and pour in the sauce. Stir until the mixture thickens **4**, about 3 minutes. Add the sesame oil and mix well. Refrigerate. (The filling may be made up to 1 day ahead; keep refrigerated and do not freeze.)

A. Make the barbecued roast pork

Cut the pork loin lengthwise into 4 equal strips. Using a small knife, pierce each strip 4 times to help the marinade penetrate the meat. Put the pork in a shallow bowl.

Combine the honey, oyster sauce, hoisin sauce, double dark soy sauce, light soy sauce, Shaoxing, five-spice powder, ½ tsp. salt, and a pinch of white pepper in a small bowl and pour over the meat to coat well. Refrigerate for at least 8 hours or overnight.

Position a rack in the top third of the oven and heat the oven to 450°F. Line a large heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet with heavy-duty foil. Put the meat on the baking sheet and spoon some of the marinade over it. Roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the middle of the pork registers 165°F, 30 to 40 minutes. During cooking, baste the meat with the juice from the pan and flip it 4 times.

Position an oven rack about 4 inches from the broiler and heat the broiler on high. Broil the pork until it's slightly charred in places, about 2 minutes **1**.

Let the pork cool and then refrigerate until you're ready to make the bun filling. (The pork may be refrigerated for up to 5 days or frozen for up to a month.)



COOKING CLASS

C. Make the dough

Mix the flour, sugar, and baking powder on a clean work surface and make a well in the center. While slowly pouring the milk into the well, use your fingers in a circular motion to pull the flour mixture into the milk until it's absorbed **5**. Make another well, add 3 Tbs. room-temperature water, and continue to use your fingers to work the dough **6**. Add the lard or peanut oil and, using your fingers and a dough scraper or bench knife, work the dough until thoroughly combined **7**.

Gather the dough with the dough scraper in one hand and begin kneading with the other. Knead the dough for 10 to 12 minutes—it should feel smooth, pliable, elastic, and slightly tacky to the touch **8**. If the dough is too sticky to work with, sprinkle a little flour on the work surface and your hands as you knead it. If the dough feels dry, lightly wet your hands with water and continue kneading. When the dough is smooth and elastic, shape it into a ball, cover with a slightly damp cloth, and let rest at room temperature for about 1 hour. (The dough must be used within 2 hours of the time it was made. It cannot be frozen.)



5



6



7



8



9

D. Portion the dough

Have ready sixteen 2½-inch squares of parchment or waxed paper.

Lightly flour a work surface. Roll the prepared dough into a 16-inch-long log. Cut the log into 16 equal pieces and then roll each piece into a ball **9**. Cover the dough with the damp cloth.



Watch a video of Eileen making her steamed pork buns at FineCooking.com/extras.



10 11



12 13



E. Make the buns

Working with one piece at a time, shape a dough ball into a cup that's about 1½ inches deep and about 3 inches in diameter **10**. The sides of the dough cup should be thinner than the bottom. Hold the dough cup in one hand and spoon about 1 Tbs. of the pork filling into the center **11**. Gather the edges of the dough and pull them up and over the filling, using your thumb to push the filling down as you pleat with your fingers to cover the filling **12**. It may seem like a tight fit at first, but the dough will stretch as you pull it around the filling. Twist the top to seal the bun and pinch off any excess

dough **13**. Put the bun, knot side up, on a parchment square and set aside. As you gain confidence, you may use 1½ Tbs. of filling in subsequent buns. Repeat until 16 buns have been made, cleaning off your thumb on a damp cloth after making each bun.

Divide the buns (still on their parchment squares) equally between 2 bamboo steamers, spacing the buns at least 2 inches apart. Stack the steamers on top of each other and cover.

In a wok, bring 6 cups of water to a boil over high heat. Set the stacked steamers over the boiling water and steam the buns until they look fluffy and their tops

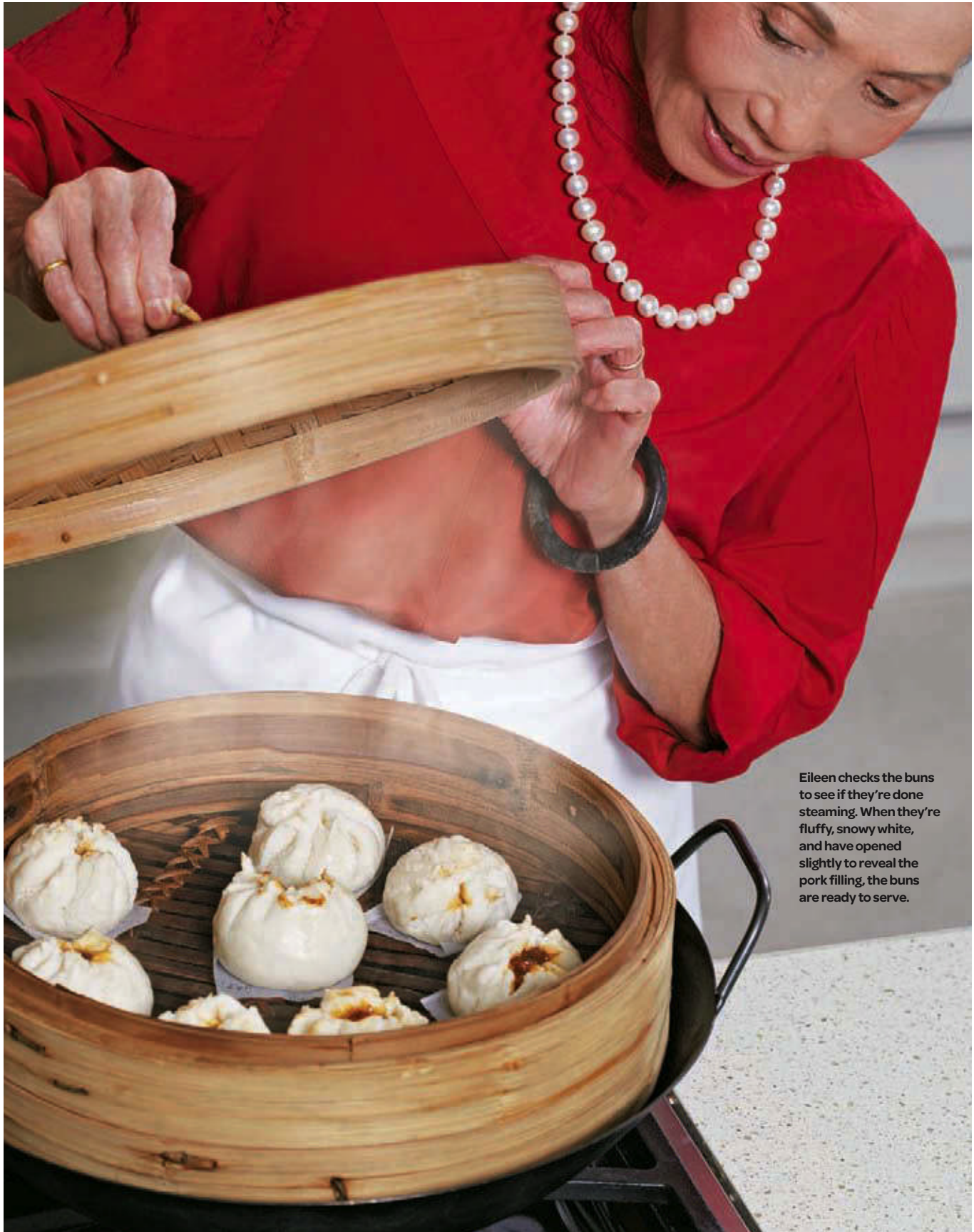
have opened like flowers to slightly reveal the filling, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove the steamers from the wok, put them on platters and serve the buns immediately, straight from the steamers.

MAKE AHEAD

Cooked buns will keep in an airtight container for 3 to 4 days in the refrigerator or 4 to 6 weeks in the freezer.

To reheat: If frozen, let the buns thaw and come to room temperature; if refrigerated, let them come to room temperature. Then steam the buns in bamboo steamers until very hot, 5 to 7 minutes.

COOKING CLASS



Eileen checks the buns to see if they're done steaming. When they're fluffy, snowy white, and have opened slightly to reveal the pork filling, the buns are ready to serve.



Serving Steamed Buns

You can enjoy steamed pork buns as an appetizer or, as Eileen often does, as a snack with a cup of hot tea. They also make a delicious lunch when paired with stir-fried bok choy and a cucumber salad dressed with salt, sugar, and rice vinegar. For a spicy kick, you can serve the buns with a simple dipping sauce made of dry mustard and hot pepper sauce.

Eileen Yin-Fei Lo is the author of 11 cookbooks on Chinese cuisine. She lives in New Jersey and teaches cooking classes across the country. ■



PICKLING IS BEING PIGEONHOLED as a summertime activity, and we want it to stop. After all, preserving—in this case, making pickles—is a good thing to do any time of the year. Even now, in the dead of winter.

It's a great time for ingredients like onions, fennel, and mushrooms, all of which are absolutely delicious in a quick pickle (no canning required). The pickles won't last as long as their canned cousins—a couple of weeks is the norm—but they're milder and less sour than canned pickles, so you can actually cook with them. And cook with these pickles, you should. Their tangy bite will brighten your winter table and maybe even make you wish that the cold weather would last.



in a pickle

Mushrooms, fennel, and onions are turned into quick and easy pickles (no canning required!). Use them to perk up your cold-weather cooking.

RECIPES BY EUGENIA BONE



Three winter-loving vegetables make quick pickles, which in turn, make three inspired dishes (turn the page for a good look).







PICKLED MUSHROOMS WITH GARLIC AND HERBS

Use as many varieties of mushrooms as you can find for the best flavor and texture. In addition to the pizza here, try these with any egg or cheese dish.

Yields about 1 quart

- 6 cups mixed mushrooms** (such as maitake, enoki, oyster, cremini, shiitake, and royal trumpet), washed, trimmed, and if large, halved or separated into smaller sections
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme**
- 1 cup white wine vinegar**
- 3 Tbs. olive oil**
- 1 Tbs. granulated sugar**
- 10 whole peppercorns**
- 1 dried bay leaf**
- 1 large clove garlic, slivered**
- 1 small dried hot red chile** (about 2 inches long)
- Kosher salt**

Bring an 8-quart pot of water to a boil. Immerse a quart-size canning jar, lid, and band in the water and boil for 10 minutes to sterilize. With tongs, transfer to a clean dishtowel to drain.

Boil the mushrooms in the water until tender, 10 minutes. Drain and pack them into the jar along with the thyme sprigs.

In a small saucepan, bring the vinegar, oil, sugar, peppercorns, bay leaf, garlic, chile, 1 Tbs. salt, and ½ cup water to a boil over medium heat. Pour the mixture over the mushrooms until it reaches the top of the jar. Screw on the lid, cool to room temperature, and refrigerate for 3 days before using. The mushrooms will keep in the refrigerator for at least 2 weeks.

pickled mushroom and gruyère pizza

An unexpectedly delicious combination of nutty Gruyère and tangy pickled mushrooms makes this simple pizza a knockout. Served with a green salad, it makes a quick vegetarian dinner for two.

Yields two 10-inch pizzas

- 1 lb. pizza dough, at room temperature**
All-purpose flour for rolling
Olive oil for brushing
- 1½ cups Pickled Mushrooms with Garlic and Herbs** (recipe at right), drained
- 1½ cups grated Gruyère**
- 2 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**

Position a rack in the lowest part of the oven and heat the oven to 500°F.

Divide the pizza dough into two balls. On a lightly floured surface, roll one of the balls out to a 10-inch circle. Put the dough on a pizza pan or baking sheet and brush with olive oil. Bake until the dough is just beginning to color, 8 to 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, chop the mushrooms into bite-size pieces. Remove the pizza from the oven and sprinkle half of the Gruyère, mushrooms, and parsley over the pizza, leaving a ½-inch border. Continue to bake until the edges of the pizza are brown and the cheese is thoroughly melted, 5 to 7 minutes.

Repeat with the other half of the dough and toppings.



PICKLED FENNEL WITH MUSTARD AND PEPPERCORNS

Tangy pickled fennel is a good match for fish and seafood. It's also great with roasted lean meats like chicken and pork (as in the recipe here).

Yields about 2 pints

- ½ tsp. yellow mustard seeds**
- ½ tsp. whole black peppercorns**
- 1 1-lb. fennel bulb, trimmed, cored, and thinly sliced**
- 1 cup white wine vinegar**
- ½ cup granulated sugar**
- 3 Tbs. olive oil**
- Kosher salt**

Have ready 2 sterilized wide-mouth pint jars, bands, and lids (see Pickled Mushrooms, p. 85). Toast the mustard seeds and peppercorns in a small dry skillet over medium heat until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Grind to a medium-coarse texture in a spice grinder or with a mortar and pestle. Pack the fennel into the jars, layering it with the spice mixture.

In a medium saucepan, bring the vinegar, sugar, oil, 1 Tbs. salt, and ½ cup water to a boil over medium heat. Pour the liquid over the fennel until it reaches the top of the jars. Screw on the lids, cool to room temperature, and refrigerate for 3 days before using. The fennel will keep in the refrigerator for at least 2 weeks.

sweet-and-sour pork chops with pickled fennel

Here, pickled fennel brightens up a simple weeknight pork chop supper. Serve with sautéed spinach or chard.

Serves 4

- 1 cup freshly squeezed orange juice; more as needed**
- 2 Tbs. packed dark brown sugar**
- 4 1-inch-thick bone-in pork chops (about 2 lb.)**
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 Tbs. olive oil**
- 1 pint Pickled Fennel with Mustard and Peppercorns (recipe at right)**

In a small bowl, mix the orange juice and sugar until dissolved.

Season the pork chops on both sides with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Brown the chops on both sides, about 5 minutes total. Transfer to a plate.

Add the orange juice mixture to the skillet, lower the heat to medium, and cook, scraping the bottom of the skillet with a wooden spoon, for about 1 minute. Add the chops and their juice, turn to coat with the sauce, and cook, basting occasionally, until nearly done (they'll feel firm when poked with a finger), about 4 minutes. If the sauce evaporates, add a bit more orange juice.

With tongs, pull the pickled fennel from the jar and add it to the pan, leaving the liquid behind. Cook until the pork reaches 145°F. Serve immediately.



PICKLED CIPOLLINI ONIONS WITH CHILE AND CLOVES

Available throughout the winter, cipollini onions vary in size, so choose the smallest ones you can find, preferably all the same size. Pickled, they're great in composed salads, stuffed into a chicken before roasting, or used as a cocktail garnish.

Yields 1 pint

- ½ lb. small cipollini onions, peeled**
- 1 sprig fresh thyme**
- ¾ cup white wine vinegar**
- 6 Tbs. granulated sugar**
- 3 Tbs. olive oil**
- 4 whole cloves**
- 1 dried bay leaf**
- 1 large clove garlic, sliced**
- 1 small fresh hot chile (about 1 inch long)**
- Kosher salt**

Have ready a sterilized pint jar, lid, and band (see Pickled Mushrooms, p. 85). Wedge the onions and thyme into the jar, packing them as tightly as you can without crushing them.

In a 1-quart saucepan, bring the vinegar, sugar, oil, cloves, bay leaf, chile, garlic, and 1 tsp. salt to a boil over medium heat. Pour the mixture over the onions until it reaches the top of the jar. Distribute the cloves, bay leaf, garlic, and chile evenly throughout the jar. Screw on the lid, cool to room temperature, and refrigerate for 3 days before using. The onions will keep in the refrigerator for at least 2 weeks.

cannellini beans with tuna and pickled cipollini onions

Crunchy pickled onions, smooth, starchy beans, and luscious oil-packed tuna are delicious together in this ready-in-minutes dish. Serve it alongside roast chicken or turkey, or as a light lunch with crusty bread.

Serves 4 as a side dish

- 2 15-oz. cans cannellini beans**
- 1 6- to 7-oz. jar or can imported tuna (packed in olive oil)**
- 10 to 12 Pickled Cipollini Onions with Chile and Cloves (recipe at left), thickly sliced**
- Juice from ½ lemon**

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 Tbs. finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Drain and rinse the beans. Transfer them to a serving bowl.

Drain the tuna, flake, and add it to the beans.

Toss the onions with the bean mixture. Add lemon juice, salt, and pepper to taste. Stir in the parsley and serve.

Eugenia Bone is a recipe developer, food writer, and the author of Well-Preserved. □



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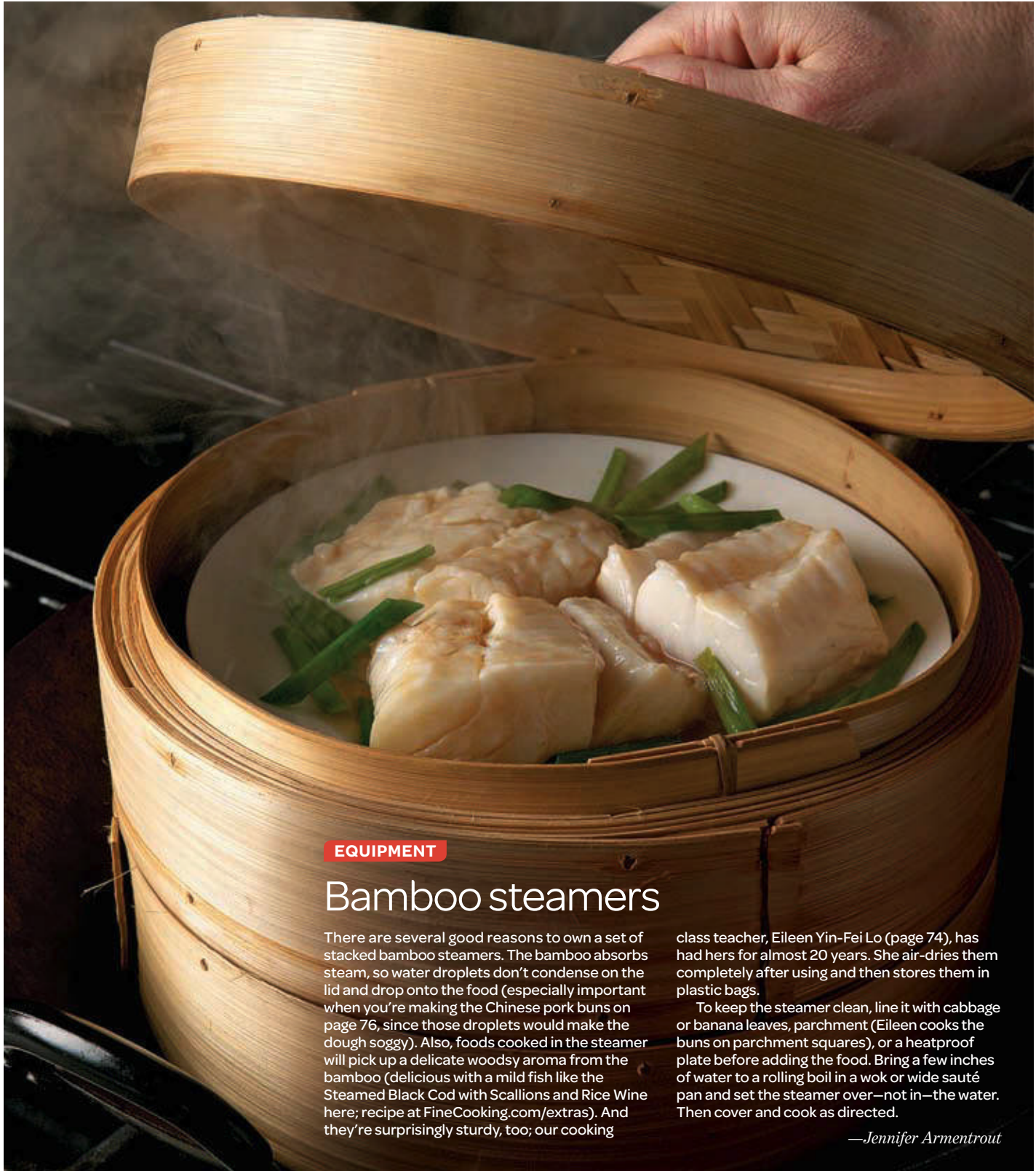
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TEST KITCHEN

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EQUIPMENT

Bamboo steamers

There are several good reasons to own a set of stacked bamboo steamers. The bamboo absorbs steam, so water droplets don't condense on the lid and drop onto the food (especially important when you're making the Chinese pork buns on page 76, since those droplets would make the dough soggy). Also, foods cooked in the steamer will pick up a delicate woodsy aroma from the bamboo (delicious with a mild fish like the Steamed Black Cod with Scallions and Rice Wine here; recipe at FineCooking.com/extras). And they're surprisingly sturdy, too; our cooking

class teacher, Eileen Yin-Fei Lo (page 74), has had hers for almost 20 years. She air-dries them completely after using and then stores them in plastic bags.

To keep the steamer clean, line it with cabbage or banana leaves, parchment (Eileen cooks the buns on parchment squares), or a heatproof plate before adding the food. Bring a few inches of water to a rolling boil in a wok or wide sauté pan and set the steamer over—not in—the water. Then cover and cook as directed.

—Jennifer Armentrout



TECHNIQUE

How to disjoint a rabbit

TO MAKE THE SPICED RABBIT TAGINE with Peas and Carrots on page 43, you'll need to cut each rabbit into eight pieces: two hind legs, two forequar-

ters (front legs), and the loins split into four pieces. Fortunately, disjointing a rabbit is no harder than cutting up a chicken. —*Juli Roberts*



Lay the rabbit on its back with its hind legs facing you. Separate a hind leg by cutting along the seam of the thigh muscle until you expose the leg joint. Push the leg back until the joint separates.



Follow through with your knife, making a few small cuts to remove the leg. Repeat on the other side.



Lift a forequarter by the elbow joint and cut all around the shoulder area until the leg comes off—it should separate easily. Repeat with the other forequarter.



Flip the rabbit belly side down. Run your knife along either side of the spine and down the rib cage to release a bit of each loin; then you can pull away the rest of it—the belly flaps will remain attached to the carcass. Cut each loin in half.

INGREDIENT

Epazote

Also known as Mexican tea or wormseed, epazote is a pungent herb with an aroma reminiscent of citrus, tea, and parsley. It's typically paired with beans, especially black beans, like the ones on page 52.

Epazote is available fresh and dried. Look for it at Latin markets, or see page 94 for a mail-order source. —*J.A.*



TECHNIQUE

How to peel pearl onions

FRESH PEARL ONIONS are the devil to peel unless you know a little trick—blanch them in boiling water first, and they practically peel themselves. Here's how:

Trim the root ends of the onions. Blanch the onions in boiling water for about 30 seconds and then transfer them to a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking.

Pinch each onion at its stem end, and it should just slip out of its skin. If not, use a paring knife to remove the skin. —*J.A.*



TIP

Use wet hands for shaping meatloaf

GROUND MEAT MIXTURES, like those for meatloaves (page 58) and meatballs, can be sticky to work with. Handling the mixture with wet hands helps cut down on the stickiness. And for the best texture, use light pressure to shape the meat—you want to avoid compacting it too much or it'll become dense when cooked. —J.A.


EQUIPMENT

Beans under pressure

One thing we learned while testing the pressure cookers on page 32 is that they're great for cooking dried beans. Pressure-cooked beans have an incredibly creamy texture, and they're quick to make, with a cooking time of less than 20 minutes for most varieties.

We used the Fagor Futuro to prepare the black beans that accompany the Corn and Amaranth Griddlecakes on page 52. Here's how we did it.

In a pressure cooker, combine the beans, water, epazote, and garlic as directed in the recipe. Add 2 Tbs. vegetable oil (recommended by Fagor to lessen foaming). Lock on the lid and bring the cooker to high pressure. Once high pressure is reached, cook for 15 minutes. Release the pressure and taste a few beans for doneness. If not quite tender, bring the cooker back up to pressure (this will take only about a minute), cook for another 2 minutes, and check again. Finish the beans according to the recipe, but simmer them for only 5 minutes after adding the salt so they don't overcook. —J.A.

INGREDIENT

Ras el hanout

The exotic aroma of the Spiced Rabbit Tagine on page 43 comes from *ras el hanout*, a Moroccan spice blend that may contain as many as 50 ingredients. There's no specific formula for *ras el hanout*; it varies from spice merchant to merchant, but the name, which translates to "top of the shop" or "head of the shop," means that the blend contains the best spices in the shop. The usual suspects include nutmeg, mace, cinnamon, turmeric, ginger, cardamom, white pepper, anise, and dried lavender and rosebuds. Truly authentic blends may also contain aphrodisiacs like Spanish fly and monk's pepper.

Look for *ras el hanout* at specialty shops and well-stocked grocery stores, or see page 94 for a mail-order source. You can also make your own blend, following the recipe below. And since there's no exact formula, feel free to adjust it to suit your own taste. —J. A.

For the best flavor, toast whole spices before grinding.

easy ras el hanout

This simplified version of the famous Moroccan spice blend contains only spices that are easy to find in grocery stores. Use *ras el hanout* to add warm spice flavor to any stew, or try dusting it over a rack of lamb or pork before roasting.

Yields about ½ cup

- 5 green cardamom pods
- 3 3-inch cinnamon sticks, broken into pieces
- 2 whole cloves
- 1 dried bay leaf
- 1 tsp. cumin seed
- 1 tsp. whole allspice berries
- 1 tsp. white peppercorns
- ¼ tsp. aniseed
- ¼ tsp. dried lavender (optional)

- 1 whole nutmeg
- 1½ tsp. ground ginger
- 1½ tsp. ground mace
- 1 tsp. ground turmeric
- ¼ tsp. ground cayenne

In a small, dry skillet, toast the cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, bay leaf, cumin, allspice, peppercorns, aniseed, and lavender (if using) over medium-low heat until fragrant, about 3 minutes. Grind to a fine powder in an electric spice grinder and transfer to a small bowl. In the grinder, pulse the nutmeg into a powder (or finely grate it by hand) and add it to the other freshly ground spices. Add the ginger, mace, turmeric, and cayenne and mix well. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dark spot for up to 6 months.



THINLY SLICED

INGREDIENT

Chinese Barbecued Pork

Because barbecued pork is delicious on its own, and it's no harder to make extra, Eileen Yin-Fei Lo's recipe for Steamed Pork Buns on page 76 yields more than you need for filling the buns. Serve the extra as a main course with rice and broccoli, or try it in one of these ideas:

Barbecued pork and leek stir-fry Stir-fry minced ginger until fragrant, then add thinly sliced barbecued pork and stir-fry until hot. Drizzle in a little Shaoxing wine, and then add a few tablespoons of reserved pork marinade. Add thinly sliced leeks and cook until tender.

Pork and shrimp fried rice Scramble a couple of beaten eggs in hot oil in a wok. Transfer the eggs to a cutting board and coarsely chop. Clean the wok, and then stir-fry peeled and deveined shrimp. Add cold cooked rice, diced barbecued pork, and peas and stir-fry until hot. Drizzle with a sauce of oyster sauce, soy sauce, Shaoxing, and sesame oil; toss in thinly sliced scallions and the eggs.

Wonton watercress soup Infuse chicken broth with sliced ginger; then simmer homemade or frozen wontons or potstickers in the broth until tender. Garnish the soup with matchstick pieces of barbecued pork and tender watercress sprigs. —J.A.

DICED

MATCHSTICKS

TECHNIQUE

Wrapping meatloaf in bacon

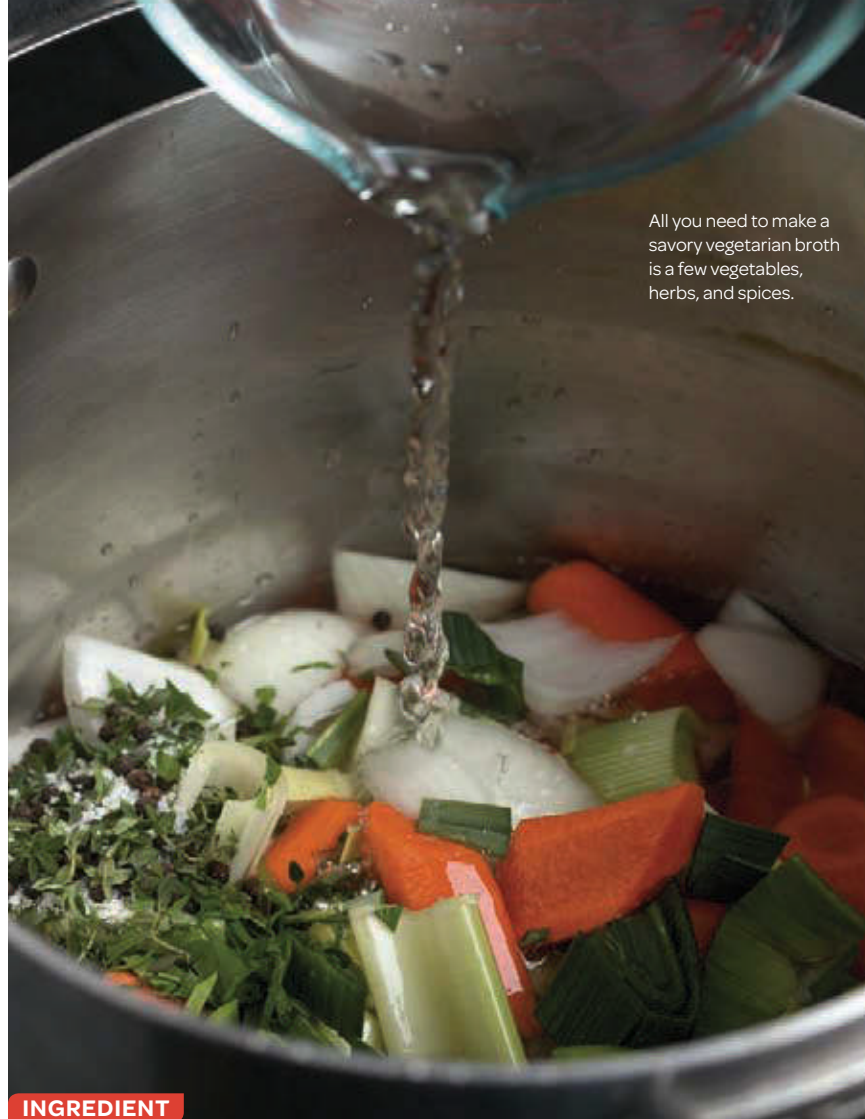
Our food stylist, Samantha Seneviratne, has a great eye for food presentation. When she prepared the meatloaves for the photos on pages 58 to 65, she decided to bacon-wrap the loaves using a cool diagonal pattern rather than simply laying the bacon strips straight across. Here's how she did it:



Layer overlapping strips of bacon on the meatloaf on the diagonal, covering the meat as much as possible. Trim the ends of the bacon, leaving a ½-inch overhang.



Gently tuck the bacon overhang under the meatloaf. Use additional bacon strips, trimmed as necessary, to patch any uncovered areas.



All you need to make a savory vegetarian broth is a few vegetables, herbs, and spices.

INGREDIENT

Vegetable Broth

OVER THE YEARS, we've tried many brands of vegetable broth, and the flavor has always been disappointing. When we tested the Millet and Cheddar Polenta on page 55 with a store-bought broth, the processed flavor of the broth ruined the dish. But with author Anna Thomas's homemade veggie broth, the polenta was amazing. A bonus: it's relatively quick and inexpensive to make.

—J.A.

homemade vegetable broth

Use this savory broth in place of chicken broth in any recipe.

Yields 6 to 7 cups

- 6 medium carrots, chopped
- 3 medium celery stalks, chopped
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 1 medium leek (including dark-green parts), chopped
- ½ cup coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves or 1 tsp. dried
- 1 dried bay leaf

- 1¼ tsp. sea salt
- 1 tsp. black peppercorns

Combine all of the ingredients in a 6-quart pot. Add 3 quarts of water and bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat to maintain a simmer and cook until flavorful, about 50 minutes. Strain the broth through a colander, then once more through a fine sieve. Store in the refrigerator for up to 5 days or in the freezer for up to 6 months.

—Anna Thomas

INGREDIENT

Chinese soy sauces

Each of the three kinds of soy sauce in the Steamed Pork Bun recipe on page 76 contributes a different flavor nuance.



LIGHT SOY SAUCE (aka pure bean or thin soy sauce) is used to enhance the flavors of the other ingredients in a recipe. It's thin and savory. Light soy is what westerners think of as regular soy sauce; it's not a reduced-sodium "lite" soy sauce.



DARK SOY SAUCE (aka black soy sauce) is thick and sweet, often from added molasses. It's used to give dark color and flavor to a dish.



DOUBLE DARK SOY SAUCE (aka double black soy sauce) is even thicker, darker, and sweeter than dark soy. It's also used for adding color and rich, sweet flavor.

Look for Chinese soy sauces at Asian markets, or see page 94 for a mail-order source. After opening, store soy sauces tightly capped at room temperature for up to 6 months.

—J.A.



WHERE TO BUY IT

dinner for two, p. 56

- **Porcelain sake cup** in Steamer, \$22, DBO Home, dbohomer.com, 860-364-6008.
- **Seafood forks**, \$32 for a set of four, williams-sonoma.com, 877-812-6235.
- **Large white tray, porcelain salad plate, wool and angora throw, and vintage silver-plated spoon**, courtesy of ABC Carpet & Home, abchome.com, 212-473-3000.

test kitchen, p. 89

- **Dried epazote**, \$4.35 for 0.7 oz., penzeys.com, 800-741-7787.
- **India Tree ras el hanout**, \$7.19 for 1.75 oz., cheftools.com, 206-933-0700.

From kalustyans.com, 800-352-3451:

- **Koon Chun double black soy sauce**, \$12 for 20.3 oz.
- **Pearl River Bridge dark soy sauce**, \$8.99 for 296 ml.
- **Pearl River Bridge light soy sauce**, \$8.99 for 500 ml.



repertoire, p. 34

- **Cuisinart 1-quart saucepan with lid**, \$27.95, everythingkitchens.com, 866-852-4268.
- **OXO Good Grips 9-inch whisk**, \$7.50, chefsresource.com, 866-765-2433.

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steamed pork buns, p. 74

- **Red table** courtesy of Monique Shay Antiques & Design, moniqueshayantiques.com, 203-263-3186.

From kalustyans.com, 800-352-3451:

- **Roland oyster sauce**, \$6.99 for 7 oz.
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From wokshop.stores.yahoo.net, 888-780-7171:

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bananas, p. 66

- **Frozen banana leaves**, \$4.99 for 1 lb., grocerythai.com, 818-469-9407.
- **Coarse bright sanding sugar**, \$2.25 for 4 oz., kingarthurfleur.com, 800-827-6836.
- **Thai Kitchen red curry paste**, \$3.69 for 4 oz., organicedirect.com, 347-305-3545.
- **Stainless-steel dough scraper/bench knife**, \$6.75, breadtopia.com, 800-469-7989.
- **Large Classic Bamboo platter**, \$198, juliska.com, 888-414-8448.

kimchi, p. 18

- **Korean crushed red pepper (gochu garu)**, \$4.99 for 1 lb., koamart.com.

kumquats, p. 15

- **Nagami kumquats**, \$21.90 for 5-lb. box, kumquatgrowers.com, 352-588-0544.

meatloaf, p. 58

- **Anchor Hocking oyster cocktail glasses**, courtesy of Anchor Hocking, anchorhocking.com.

one-pot dinners, p. 40

- **Le Creuset Dutch ovens** in Ocean, \$199 to \$415, williams-sonoma.com, 877-812-6235.
- **Le Creuset Dutch ovens** in White, Flame, Cherry, and Cassis, \$189 to \$400, bedbathandbeyond.com, 800-462-3966.
- **Whole natural rabbit**, 2¼- to 3¼-lb. fryer, \$34.99, dartagnan.com, 800-327-8246.
- **12-oz. duck leg quarters**, \$2.95 each, mapleleaffarms.com, 800-382-5546.

From kalustyans.com, 800-352-3451:

- **Whole star anise**, \$4.99 for 1 oz.
- **Dried Calimyrna figs**, \$14.99 for 1 lb.
- **Cane vinegar**, \$14.99 for 1 lt.

in a pickle, p. 82

- **Corian countertop** provided by DuPont, dupont.com.

go for the grain, p. 48

- **Ancient Harvest Inca red quinoa**, \$5.79 for 12 oz., navanfoods.com, 866-707-7706.
- **La Valletta pearled farro**, \$6.50 for 1.1 lb., gustiamo.com, 877-907-2525.
- **Pillivuyt small serving platter**, \$52, cookware.com, 888-478-4606.

From bobsredmill.com, 800-349-2173:

- **Hulled millet**, \$2.72 for 28 oz.
- **Amaranth flour**, \$7.55 for 22 oz.
- **Teff flour**, \$6.81 for 24 oz.





NUTRITION

Recipes	Calories (kcal)	Fat Cal (kcal)	Protein (g)	Carb (g)	Total Fat (g)	Sat Fat (g)	Mono Fat (g)	Poly Fat (g)	Chol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)
KUMQUATS, P. 15											
Kumquat-Riesling Sauce	150	0	1	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
CABBAGE, P. 18											
Kimchi (per ½ cup)	100	30	7	12	3.5	0.5	1	1	15	1330	3
CELERY, P. 20											
Celery, Fennel, and Black Olive Salad with Parmigiano Dressing	140	100	5	6	12	2.5	5	3	10	740	2
Cream of Celery and Celery Root Soup	170	90	7	15	10	4.5	4	1.5	15	330	3
Sautéed Celery with Leeks and Mushrooms	130	80	3	11	9	1.5	7	1	0	220	3
MAKE IT TONIGHT, P. 22											
Poached Eggs with Creamy Brussels Sprouts and Bacon	570	360	25	29	40	19	13	3	510	740	4
Lamb and Sweet Onion Pitats with Orange-Cucumber Salad	470	240	25	33	26	9	13	2	80	580	4
Mashed Sweet Potatoes with Mango Chutney	320	100	3	51	11	7	3	0.5	40	430	5
Quick Chicken Vindaloo	360	180	33	12	20	4	9	5	110	670	2
French Apple Turnovers	430	250	6	40	28	6	7	14	60	240	2
Linguine with Lemon-Garlic Shrimp	830	410	40	62	45	24	12	2.5	340	640	4
Pretzel-Crusted Chicken Breasts with Dipping Sauce	810	440	43	47	50	8	17	22	210	1210	2
CREAMED SPINACH, P. 34											
Classic Creamed Spinach	140	100	5	7	11	7	3	0.5	35	250	2
GOOD LIFE, P. 36											
Chili Con Carne	610	270	53	33	30	8	17	4	120	960	13
FOOD SCIENCE, P. 38											
Sugar Cookies (per cookie)	120	45	1	17	5	3	1.5	0	20	70	0
ONE-POT DINNERS, P. 40											
Braised Beef Short Ribs with Salsa Verde and Feta	940	530	49	18	59	16	35	5	115	1390	2
Braised Duck Legs with Figs, Star Anise, and Winter Squash	660	190	48	75	21	5	10	4	165	1030	12
Cane Vinegar Chicken with Pearl Onions, Oranges, and Spinach	620	320	43	30	36	14	13	6	170	1070	6
Spiced Rabbit Tagine with Peas and Carrots	550	260	56	15	29	6	14	4.5	150	1480	5
Malaysian Chicken and Rice	670	290	50	40	33	7	10	12	140	3070	1
GRAINS, P. 48											
Corn and Amaranth Griddlecakes with Spicy Black Beans	600	230	22	75	26	8	10	5	75	1410	17
Farro and Beluga Lentil Pilaf with Ginger and Cilantro	170	50	5	25	6	1	4	1	0	250	4
Millet and Cheddar Polenta with Roasted Vegetables	900	320	28	120	36	14	13	4	55	1290	14
Quinoa Salad with Apples, Walnuts, Cranberries, and Gouda	330	170	9	34	19	4	7	7	15	350	4
Swiss Chard, Sweet Potato, and Feta Tart in a Teff Crust	490	270	12	44	31	16	10	1.5	125	1270	6
DINNER FOR TWO, P. 56											
Vodka-Steamers Lobsters with Tomato-Thyme Butter Sauce	500	190	46	12	22	9	9	2.5	185	740	1
Bittersweet Chocolate Pots de Crème	430	230	9	43	25	15	9	1	235	105	5
MEATLOAF, P. 58											
Stout and Cheddar Meatloaf	390	210	32	12	23	8	10	2.5	155	840	1
Turkey, Bacon, and Fennel Meatloaf	390	200	31	13	22	6	9	4.5	150	810	1
Double Mushroom and Sherry Meatloaf	300	140	24	13	15	5	7	2.5	130	610	1
BANANAS, P. 66											
Pork Braised in Banana Leaves with Manchamantel Sauce	350	150	35	13	17	6	7	3	105	570	2
Lemon-Glazed Banana Scones with Crystallized Ginger	390	190	4	47	21	13	6	1	65	250	1
Banana Split Brownies	370	200	4	44	23	14	7	1	90	100	3
Overnight Banana Sticky Buns with Pecans	490	190	8	69	21	8	8	3.5	50	280	4
Thai-Style Halibut and Banana Curry with Peanuts	550	300	42	28	33	23	4.5	3	55	520	5
STEAMED PORK BUNS, P. 74											
Steamed Pork Buns	270	60	15	36	7	2	3	1.5	40	700	1
IN A PICKLE, P. 82											
Pickled Cipolini Onions with Chile and Cloves (per ½ cup)	40	10	1	7	1	0	0.5	0	0	30	1
Cannellini Beans with Tuna and Pickled Cipolini Onions	240	30	21	32	3.5	0	0	1	15	600	9
Pickled Fennel with Mustard and Peppercorns (per ½ cup)	20	5	1	4	0.5	0	0	0	0	65	1
Sweet-and-Sour Pork Chops with Pickled Fennel	500	310	29	18	35	12	16	3	105	430	1
Pickled Mushrooms with Garlic and Herbs (per ½ cup)	20	5	1	3	0.5	0	0	0	0	45	1
Pickled Mushroom and Gruyère Pizza (per pizza)	1040	370	46	115	42	16	14	2	90	1850	5
TEST KITCHEN, P. 89											
Homemade Vegetable Broth (per cup)	15	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	490	0

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at Nutritional Solutions in Melville, New York. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used. Optional ingredients

with measured amounts are included; ingredients without specific quantities are not. Analyses are per serving; when a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion

is used. When the quantities of salt and pepper aren't specified, the analysis is based on ¼ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper per serving for entrées, and ½ tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper per serving for side dishes.



MENUS



Snowy Night In

The Manhattan
page 30

Garden Lettuce
with Garlic Chapons
FineCooking.com

Braised Short Ribs with
Salsa Verde and Feta
page 46

Soft Polenta
FineCooking.com

French Apple Turnovers
page 24

*To drink: Meantime
London Porter, London, UK*



Brunch with Friends

Winter Fruit Salad
FineCooking.com

Poached Eggs with Creamy
Brussels Sprouts and Bacon
page 26

Lemon-Glazed Banana Scones
with Crystallized Ginger
page 69

Coffee, tea, and freshly squeezed
grapefruit juice

Three Weeknight Dinners

Arugula Salad
with Pesto Vinaigrette
FineCooking.com

Linguine with
Lemon-Garlic Shrimp
page 23

Tomato-Fennel Soup
FineCooking.com

Lamb and Sweet Onion Pitas
with Orange-Cucumber Salad
page 22

Thai-Style Halibut and Banana
Curry with Peanuts
page 68

Steamed Jasmine Rice
FineCooking.com



Book Club Lunch

Cream of Celery and Celery Root Soup
page 21

Swiss Chard, Sweet Potato,
and Feta Tart in a Teff Crust
page 53

Sugar Cookies
page 39

*To drink: Loimer Lois Grüner Veltliner
2008, Kamptal, Austria*



The New TV Dinner

Turkey, Bacon, and Fennel Meatloaf
page 65

Classic Creamed Spinach
page 35

Smashed Potatoes with
Horseradish Crème Fraîche
FineCooking.com

Bittersweet Chocolate
Pots de Crème
page 56

*To drink: Fleur Vineyards Petite Sirah
2007, North Coast, California*



Superbowl Sunday

Classic Cornbread
FineCooking.com

Chili con Carne
page 36

Tortilla chips

Chunky Guacamole
FineCooking.com

Banana Split Brownies
page 73

*To drink: Ballast Point Sculpin IPA,
San Diego, California*





RECIPE INDEX

Cover


Stout and Cheddar Meatloaf ... **65**

Soup, Salad & Eggs

 Celery, Fennel, and Black Olive Salad with Parmigiano Dressing **21**

 Cream of Celery and Celery Root Soup **21**

 Homemade Vegetable Broth .. **93**


 Poached Eggs with Creamy Brussels Sprouts and Bacon **26**


Chicken, Duck & Rabbit

Braised Duck Legs with Figs, Star Anise, and Winter Squash **42**

Cane Vinegar Chicken Stew with Pearl Onions, Oranges, and Spinach **42**

Malaysian Chicken and Rice **47**


 Pretzel-Crusted Chicken Breasts with Mustard-Dill Dipping Sauce **23**


 Quick Chicken Vindaloo **26**
Spiced Rabbit Tagine with Peas and Carrots **43**


Beef, Pork & Lamb


Braised Beef Short Ribs with Salsa Verde and Feta **46**

 Chili con Carne **36**

 Lamb and Sweet Onion Pitas with Orange-Cucumber Salad **22**

 Pork Braised in Banana Leaves with Manchamantel Sauce **72**

 Steamed Pork Buns **76**

 Sweet-and-Sour Pork Chops with Pickled Fennel **86**

Meatloaf

Blue Cheese and Bacon Meatloaf **64**

Double Mushroom and Sherry Meatloaf **65**

Greek Olive, Red Wine, and Feta Meatloaf **65**

Indian-Spiced Lamb Meatloaf **64**


Sausage, Lemon, and Parmesan Meatloaf **64**


Southwestern Spicy Pork and Bell Pepper Meatloaf **64**

Stout and Cheddar Meatloaf ... **65**


Turkey, Bacon, and Fennel Meatloaf **65**

Fish & Seafood


 Cannellini Beans with Tuna and Pickled Cippolini Onions **87**


 Linguine with Lemon-Garlic Shrimp **23**

 Thai-Style Halibut and Banana Curry with Peanuts **68**


 Vodka-Steamer Lobsters with Tomato-Thyme Butter Sauce **56**

Pasta & Pizza


 Linguine with Lemon-Garlic Shrimp **23**


 Pickled Mushroom and Gruyère Pizza **85**


Grains & Beans


 Cannellini Beans with Tuna and Pickled Cippolini Onions **87**

 Chili con Carne **36**

 Corn and Amaranth Grittlecakes with Spicy Black Beans **52**

 Farro and Beluga Lentil Pilaf with Ginger and Cilantro **54**

 Millet and Cheddar Polenta with Roasted Vegetables **55**


 Quinoa Salad with Apples, Walnuts, Dried Cranberries, and Gouda **50**

 Swiss Chard, Sweet Potato, and Feta Tart in a Teff Crust **53**

Side Dishes


 Classic Creamed Spinach **35**

 Mashed Sweet Potatoes with Mango Chutney **25**


 Sautéed Celery with Leeks and Mushrooms **20**

Condiments & Spices


 Easy Ras el Hanout **91**

 Kimchi **18**

 Kumquat-Riesling Sauce **16**

 Pickled Cippolini Onions with Chile and Cloves..... **87**

 Pickled Fennel with Mustard and Peppercorns..... **86**

 Pickled Mushrooms with Garlic and Herbs **85**

Beverages

 The Manhattan **30**


 The Martini **30**


Sweets

 Banana Split Brownies **73**

 Bittersweet Chocolate Pots De Crème **56**


 French Apple Turnovers **24**

 Lemon-Glazed Banana Scones with Crystallized Ginger **69**

 Overnight Banana Sticky Buns with Pecans **70**

 Sugar Cookies **39**

 **VEGETARIAN:** May contain eggs and dairy ingredients

 **MAKE AHEAD:** Can be completely prepared ahead (may need reheating and a garnish to serve)

 **QUICK:** Under 30 minutes



FOOD FOR THOUGHT



the dish

Name: Francine Segal

Occupation: Food historian

Age: "A girl sure hates to tell..."

Started: 2001

Where: New York City

Known for: Scholarly knowledge of aphrodisiacs

Find out more: francinesegan.com

Francine Segan

Aphrodisiacs are this food historian's bread and butter. **BY KELLY ALEXANDER**

Fine Cooking: What exactly is an aphrodisiac?

Francine Segan: The *Oxford English Dictionary* says that an aphrodisiac is a drug, a preparation, or a food that invokes lust. I say it's anything that gets your blood going.

FC: Which foods "get the blood going"?

Segan: There are a few categories: First, foods that make you tingle, like sparkling wine. Second, foods that make you warm, like cinnamon, nutmeg, and cayenne. Last, there are foods with suggestive shapes, like tiny strawberries, asparagus, figs, and vanilla.

FC: Vanilla?

Segan: It grows in long pods, so historically, people thought it was an aphrodisiac because of its shape. In fact, scientists report that the aroma of vanilla does appeal to women. Men should stop wearing cologne and wear a little vanilla extract instead.

FC: What's the strangest aphrodisiac you've come across in your research?

Segan: The Greek goddess Aphrodite—for whom aphrodisiacs are named—supposedly rose from the sea on an oyster shell, holding a sparrow. So not only are oysters aphrodisiacs because of her, but sparrows' brains are thought to be potent, too. Rhinoceros horn is another weird one. About 2000 BC, people believed it was a great aphrodisiac because the rhinoc-

eros was so aggressive and its horn had that shape. You can still get ground rhinoceros horn in Chinese apothecaries.

FC: Is that where you go when you want to buy aphrodisiacs?

Segan: No, I prefer the supermarket. But I did once go into a Chinese pharmacy in Queens, and there were these fried garlic chips behind the counter that I wanted to buy. But the owner wouldn't let me; he kept shaking his head "no." Turns out that the garlic chips were actually sliced deer antlers, and he wouldn't sell them to me because they're an aphrodisiac for men.

FC: You're a very popular speaker come Valentine's Day. Is it your favorite holiday?

Segan: I love it. I usually talk about chocolate's history as an aphrodisiac. When the Europeans discovered chocolate after the Renaissance, it became popular as an energy food. Then, during the 18th century, chocolate got a reputation as an aphrodisiac from Casanova, who wrote in his memoirs about using it to seduce women.

FC: Is chocolate your aphrodisiac of choice?

Segan: No, mine is Asti Spumante. It tingles, it's sweet, and the bubbles pop and touch your face like little butterfly kisses.

Kelly Alexander is an award-winning food writer who lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Illustration by A. Richard Allen

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Game Day Meatball Sliders

Serves 6

1-1/2 pounds ground beef or turkey
2 large eggs
1/2 cup plain dry breadcrumbs
1/3 cup plus 3 TBSP freshly grated Pecorino Romano cheese
3 TBSP Amore Garlic Paste, divided

2 tsp Amore Herb Paste, divided
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
1/4 cup plus 2 TBSP olive oil
1 (28 oz can) Italian peeled tomatoes with their juice, chopped
1/4 cup Amore Tomato Paste
18 small, soft rolls

- (1.) In large bowl, mix meat, eggs, breadcrumbs, 1/3 cup cheese, 1 tablespoon Amore Garlic Paste, 1 teaspoon Amore Herb Paste, and salt and pepper to taste. Shape mixture into 2-inch balls. In a large skillet, heat 1/4 cup oil over medium heat. Add meatballs in batches, and cook, turning them occasionally, until nicely browned.
- (2.) Remove meatballs to a plate. Discard oil in pan. Add remaining 2 tablespoons oil to skillet. Stir in Amore Tomato Paste and remaining 2 tablespoons Garlic Paste. Add tomatoes, and the remaining Amore Herb Paste and salt and pepper to taste. Bring sauce to a simmer.
- (3.) Add meatballs to sauce. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, 20 minutes or until meatballs are cooked through.
- (4.) Place a meatball in each roll with a little sauce. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Serve hot.





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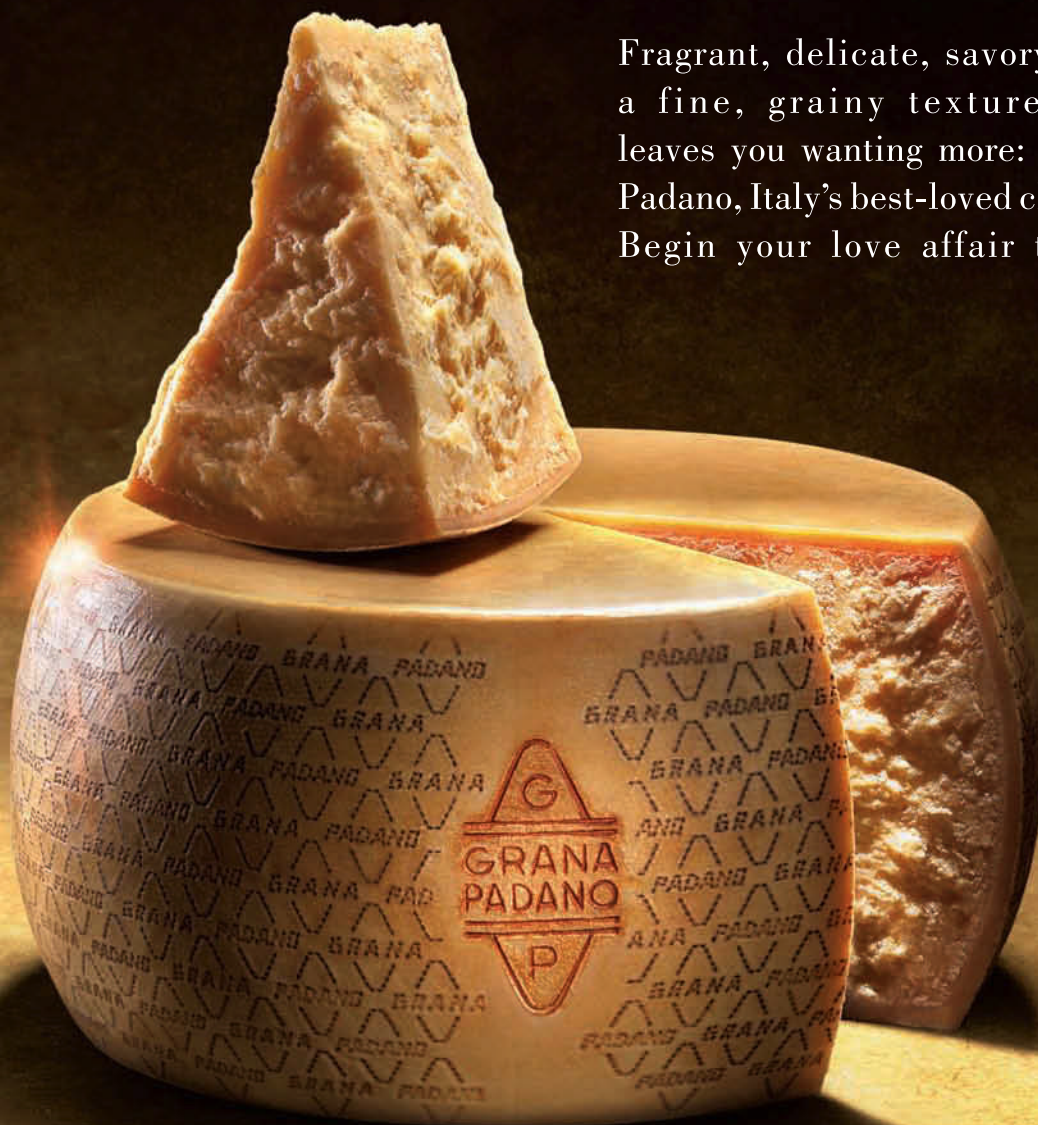
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